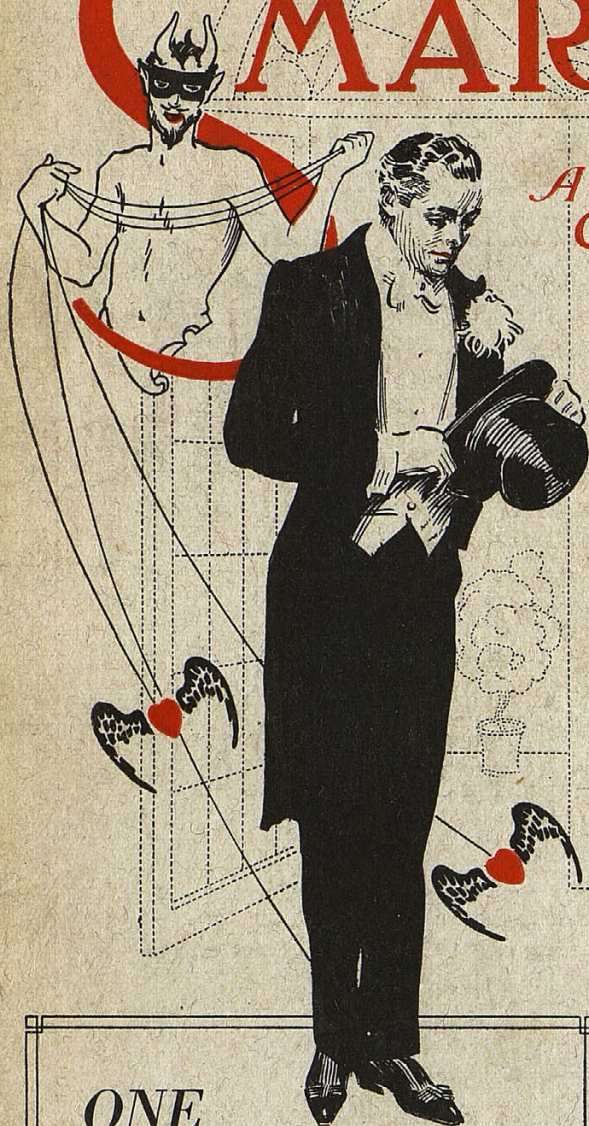


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*A Magazine of  
Cleverness*



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Vol. XLIV

OCTOBER, 1914

No. 2

# THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF  
CLEVERNESS

Manuscripts, to receive prompt attention, should be addressed, "Editors of THE SMART SET"

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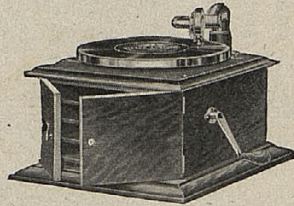
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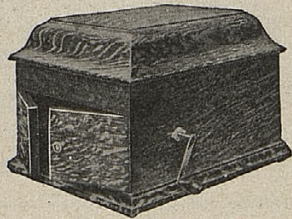
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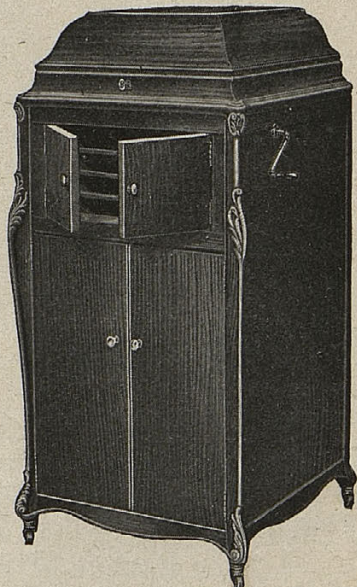
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# THE SMART SET

One civilized reader is worth a thousand boneheads.—*Aristotle.*

## WOULD A LADY HAVE DONE IT?

By Fred Jackson

MRS. OGDEN PERRY rested an elbow lightly on the corner of the mantelpiece and glanced down, through half-closed lids, at the letter in her hand. From her rather thin, down-curved lips hung a cigarette, the smoke curling upward. She was dressed in a tailored skirt of dark English mixture, gray in tone, high tan boots, a silk shirt cut like a man's, and a high white linen collar, fashioned something like a stock but having a slightly more ornate flap in front, which was held in place by a sapphire clasp. Her thick, dark hair was parted in the center and combed back severely.

The room in which she was—her morning room—reflected the simplicity of her taste. It was so plainly furnished as to seem almost incomplete—yet it contained every necessary article—and each individual object was genuinely Colonial and represented a considerable sum of money. The one touch of splendor against this background of rigid simplicity was a swinging brass urn in the corner, bearing an armful of long-stemmed, full-blown American Beauty roses rich with natural foliage. Mrs. Perry adored them.

The letter which she was reading with such an air of absorption was written upon common linen paper—in a careless, rather old-fashioned hand.

"Dear Cynthia"—it began—"I wonder if you have forgotten that Louise is thirteen years old? A long time ago, when she was a baby, you promised to give her—at the proper time—the accomplishments and schooling and social training that I am not in a position to give her. If you still desire to do this, don't you think the time is ripe to begin? She is not yet formed or 'set.' The cramping, deforming, stunting, *withering* breath of poverty has not yet spoiled her.

"I suppose you are astonished. I am astonished at myself, Cynthia, now that the words face me in brazen black and white. But I *mean* them! From my heart, I mean them, Cynthia! I have been thinking them to myself in secret for years and years and years—and I've always fought against them—denied them. But for Louise's sake—I mean to face facts now, Cynthia.

"Don't misunderstand me. I am not sorry I married as I did. You know I loved Charles. I still love him. No doubt, if it were all to be done over again, I should still marry him—because I loved him. *But I wish I might have loved someone else!*

"How I hate that thought—but—it's *true*. When I married, Cynthia, I despised money. I ignored it, refused to consider it, laughed at it. I knew



Charles would never be wealthy, and I didn't care. But I've had to deal with practical things since then, and I no longer ignore the necessities of life. I look at myself in the glass and wonder if the face I see can be Virginia Taylor's. Do you remember how fresh and young and merry I looked, Cynthia? Now my mouth is tight and hard and my hair is becoming streaked with gray and my face is lined; and I've lost my figure and my youth and my merry spirit; and my hands—they aren't like yours, my dear—because I've been pinching and scraping and managing and fighting off want and need for fifteen years—and such life is not beautiful—nor does it beautify.

"I've had love, of course, but love—Not that I'd give it up—not that I'd look at any other man—not that I wish for anyone else; but oh, if Charles could have been richer—if he could have been richer!

"Do you understand me at all? I want you to understand because I want you to help me. I want Louise to marry into your world. I want all my children to marry into your world. I want them to have love, of course, but if they know only your kind, they must love someone of your kind—and by your kind I mean the rich—the very rich. Life is so hard at best, Cynthia—you know that, I think—even you; and poverty is ugly and petty and grinding. I want them to be spared that. I want them to be spared what I have had to endure.

"Will you take Louise, now? She is very pretty and graceful and sweet—and only thirteen. Pretend that she's *your* daughter. I'll give her to you. Make of her what you would have made of a daughter of your very own—if you had ever had one; I'll give you free rein.

"If you will do this for me, wire or write—and I will send her to you at once. It will be a relief to me, too, because Iris and Madge and Dickie are growing up, and their needs grow with them.

"And don't misunderstand my reasons—will you? I'm not mercenary and worldly and horrid. I just see with the eyes of experience, that's all. You can't grow big, strong, bright, beauti-

ful roses in a cellar; you need a hot-house, or a big sunny lawn.

"With my love to all of you,

"Always your devoted sister, Virginia."

Mrs. Perry folded the letter thoughtfully, her dark gray eyes unusually soft and deep, and whispered compassionately, "Poor Virginia!" Then she inhaled—and as the smoke drifted out again from her lips in a thin brown-blue stream, there came a soft knock upon the door.

"Come in," called Mrs. Perry.

The second man opened the door.

"The little girl has come," he said.

"I'll see her here," said Mrs. Perry.

As he vanished, she extended the letter toward the flames in the grate—then, upon impulse, suddenly drew it back, and crossing the room, unlocked a tiny inner draw of the desk and thrust it in there. As she locked the drawer, there came another knock upon the door, and calling again, "Come," she turned to inspect her niece.

A little girl stood uncertainly upon the threshold—a "little" girl—though she was large for her thirteen years. She wore a blue and white sailor suit that was evidently left over from two or three seasons before—for the sleeves were too short and the skirt had been "let down"—neatly enough, but still obviously, and the waistband was rather tight. She wore black stockings—woolen ones—and black shoes that had seen a good deal of wear. This Mrs. Perry's keen eye detected at a glance, in spite of the quantity of liquid blacking that had been generously bestowed upon them to cover defects. She wore tan gloves, worn at the fingers and recently cleaned; and a straw hat home-trimmed, with a big bow of dark blue ribbon that did not look fresh. Evidently it had served a turn at something else before it became hat trimming.

But the little girl's clothes could have caught the eye only at a second glance. First, one's eyes fell involuntarily upon her face—and remained there. She had very large dark blue eyes, with a



grave seriousness about them—an inquiring wistfulness that made one feel like asking: "Well? What is it?" They were honest-looking, too, those eyes—and courageous. The girl's nose was short and straight and dazzlingly perfect. Her mouth was all curves and witchery—of a carnation hue. Her skin was fine and soft and smooth, a quantity of bright pale gold hair tumbled down from under the brim of her hat to curl about her face and over her shoulders.

"Come here," said Mrs. Perry slowly, remaining where she was and watching the child's movements with sharp attention. "You are Louise—are you not?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Louise, advancing.

Mrs. Perry smiled radiantly—and took the small gloved hand in both of hers. Suddenly—instinctively—she stooped and kissed the child's warm lips. "Beauty and grace and a voice that promises to be exceptional!" she summed up to herself; more than she had ventured to hope for.

"I suppose your mother told you," she said, "that you are going to live with me for a while—to be my little girl."

"Yes, ma'am," said Louise simply.

"Say 'Yes, aunt,'" suggested Mrs. Perry. "Only servants say 'ma'am' nowadays."

The deep blue eyes widened, but the child repeated instantly, "Yes, aunt."

"I hope you will be contented with me," said Mrs. Perry. "We are going to have good times together."

Louise made no reply, but her gaze was alert.

"If you will cross the room and ring that bell," said her aunt slowly, "Fanchon will come for you—and take your hat and coat. Fanchon is going to be your especial maid and personal attendant. Whenever you want anything done, Fanchon will do it. She sews neatly, understands the intricacies of the toilet and the care of hair and skin and teeth—and hands and feet. And you can trust to her taste in the selection of just what clothes are to be worn upon every occasion."

"I haven't many clothes," said Louise gravely.

"I understand. I have ordered some for you."

Louise turned then slowly and crossed to the bell. When she had rung it and had turned back, she added, smiling: "And I sew nicely. Perhaps if—Fanchon—has a great deal to do, I—"

"You will have a great deal more to do than Fanchon," said Mrs. Perry. "So you had better not try to take any of her tasks away. You've heard, no doubt, about the devil's finding things for idle hands to do. What are your other accomplishments? Cooking, no doubt, and sweeping?"

"Not much cooking," said Louise, "but I can make beds and dress the baby—and dust—and wash dishes—"

"It's a wonder your hands haven't been spoiled. Your mother must have been training you for a housemaid."

"That's what she used to call me—just in fun," said Louise—"her Little Housemaid. And Iris is her Little Cook and Nursemaid—and Madgie is the Princess—because she is the only one who doesn't help do things. Everybody else does things *for her*."

"I see," said Mrs. Perry. For some unaccountable reason, she felt tears very near the surface. She frowned and looked severe so that the child might not suspect. Her greatest horror was a fear of displaying certain feminine weaknesses. "While you are with me," she added, "you must forget all these things—forget how to do them—forget that you ever knew. There are housemaids enough about—too many, I sometimes think. Your task will be learning to be a proper young lady. You've been to school, I suppose—public school?"

"Yes, aunt."

"It isn't necessary to say 'Yes, aunt,' every time. You might say just 'Yes' once in a while. That word is quite able to stand alone."

"Yes," said Louise politely.

"She is obviously adaptable," thought Mrs. Perry. And she added, aloud: "Naturally, you know nothing of languages, music, art, letters, discoveries, current topics, the popular sciences,



horses, dogs, motor cars and aeroplanes. These are some of the things you have got to know about. . . . And naturally, travel! We sail on Saturday—that is three days off. Shall you like to travel, do you think?"

"*Shall I?*" cried Louise, flushing, her eyes dancing. "I'd love it!"

"Splendid!" cried Mrs. Perry heartily. "There's nothing so attractive as enthusiasm—by which I do not mean *gush*! Don't ever be bored, Louise; and if you are—conceal it! It's that that kills women."

"Being bored?" asked Louise curiously.

"Both that and showing it."

Fanchon appeared in the doorway—a small, slender, black-gowned French-woman, capped and aproned in fine white linen.

"This is Fanchon—who will serve you," said Mrs. Perry, and she breathed a little sigh of satisfaction and nodded as Louise accepted the introduction with a smile. Fanchon curtsied.

"Fit mademoiselle out in the new wardrobe, Fanchon," she directed, "and then conduct her to the library and say to Master Peter that I desire him to amuse his cousin until luncheon. . . . I will see you at that time," she said, smiling at Louise and rising; "Fanchon will take charge of you."

"Thank you," said Louise, and with a smile and a funny little nod, she followed the maid.

Mrs. Perry lighted another cigarette, inhaled—and stood regarding the smoke curls curiously.

"Poor Virginia!" she sighed.

The girl followed Fanchon down the hallway—and into the pale blue and white suite—trying hard not to look impressed. But nothing that her eyes rested upon was like anything she had ever seen before. Even the clothes, laid out upon chairs and bed and table, were new clothes—quite unlike hers. But her big old-fashioned satchel, with its contents of half-worn raiment, had disappeared. And Fanchon—despoiling her of garment after garment—whisked them away and substituted fine em-

broidered linen and lace things—silk stockings—new slippers—and a handkerchief as soft as silk. It had amused Mrs. Perry for two days to order and select the things—and they showed the thought and care that had been brought to bear upon the subject. Louise, emerging swiftly from her cocoon wrappings to survey herself in butterfly splendor—displayed an excited interest in everything. But for her mother's direction to submit to Aunt Cynthia's will in everything, she must surely have felt herself sinning—she was so happy in her new surroundings.

She splashed about in the white tile bath, suffered her nails to be fixed and her hair to be combed and rubbed and dressed, and donning the new clothes, followed with light feet as Fanchon conducted her to the library and presented her to Peter with his mother's instructions.

Peter was fourteen—a very tall, very slender youth, unbelievably slender, in fact—with sharp gray eyes and brown hair the color of his mother's. His nose was short and stubby, and he had a broad, good-natured-looking mouth that was usually smiling. He was new to the glory of long trousers, and he rose hastily at Louise's advent—maybe because she was a strikingly beautiful little girl—maybe because he knew it to be the thing to do—maybe just to display the manliness and dignity of his apparel.

"Pleased to meet you, cousin," he said, and offered the hand that was not holding his book.

She smiled and put her hand into his, and Fanchon disappeared.

"It'll be bully having you about," said Peter, and suddenly he closed his book and put it down. "Have a chair," he said, generously indicating the big one opposite.

"Thank you," said Louise, sitting down.

"Not bashful, are you?" he asked, taking his stand upon the hearthrug and thrusting his hands deep into his trousers pockets.

"No," she laughed.

"You don't *seem* bashful," he admitted, twisting his eyebrows into a



knot as he looked at her, "*nor* silly. Most girls *are*, you know."

"Are they?" she asked. "I don't know many—only Madgie and Iris and the girl who lives next door to us—Molly Perkins. *She's* rather silly—but Iris isn't, and I *hope* I'm not. Madgie's too little yet to be *anything*."

"I hate babies," said Peter.

"They're cute," said Louise, "but often in the way—and—heaps of trouble. Madgie can say 'Mom' and 'Pop' and 'Me'—"

"Everyone can," said Peter. "Nothing remarkable in that."

"But she's so little," said Louise.

"Don't like 'em little," said he. "Girls are no fun even when they're big—mostly, I mean, of course. *You* look as if you might be." Already his masculine heart was succumbing.

Louise flushed. Peter flushed, too.

"Play ball?" he asked. "I suppose not."

"No," admitted Louise reluctantly.

"Skate?"

"N-no."

Peter sighed.

"Jacks, I suppose, and dolls?"

"Not a great deal," said Louise. "There wasn't much time. You see, with—lessons—and the baby and the house to look after—we helped mother and—"

"What did you do around the house?" he asked interestedly.

"Sewed and minded the baby and made beds and dusted and helped cook."

"Not really?" he cried, regarding her.

She nodded, flushing, not quite certain how her confession would be received. Such different standards seemed to be in force here.

"Bully for you!" cried Peter. "No music lessons? No French?"

She shook her head.

"*That*," said Peter, "is what I call sensible. So will dad. You wait and see. I've got ideas about such things, I tell you—but of course people don't realize that I *can* have ideas and think by myself. It's disgusting the way nobody believes you are grown up—when you *are*! Do I look like a kid to you?"

"No," said Louise emphatically.

"I'm not a kid, either," said Peter.

"But I suppose I'll have to run away and do something and get famous before mother or dad will realize it. It—it's going to be *fine* to have someone sensible to talk to now."

Louise blushed.

"I hope I'm sensible," she said seriously. "I try to be."

"I'm *sure* you are. What do you say to being pals?"

"What is it?" asked Louise.

"Telling each other secrets and everything—being real good chums—through thick and thin, you know, and all that—helping each other out of scrapes—everything of the sort."

"All right," said Louise. "That will be nice. Only, I haven't any secrets."

"Neither have I," said the boy, "not *real* ones—except smoking on the Q. T., you know—and sneaking out at night to see some life. Boys ought to be brought up with lots of liberty—don't you think? How else are they going to be men of the world?"

"I don't know," said Louise, regarding him admiringly.

"I wish I were going abroad now with you and mother," said he. "Last time it was slow—so I said I'd rather go to summer camp. Never mind, though; when you come back we'll have some *times*—"

"Yes," said Louise politely.

"Say," said Peter, glancing about with an air of mystery, "I like you, d'you know! Would you mind—kissing me?" He was scarlet—to the roots of his hair, and a daredevil atmosphere was lurid about him.

"Kissing's silly," said Louise.

"Not when—not between certain people. Not between men and good-looking girls like you. Come on—just one—before anyone comes."

"All right," said Louise generously. She held up her face, and mastering the timidity that threatened to overwhelm him, Peter brushed her cheek hastily with his lips. He was overcome by admiration at his own daring and experienced air and the ease with which he had made the conquest.



"I wish I were going abroad with you," said he. "You—you're the prettiest girl I've ever seen—and the most sensible."

Louise glanced about her interestedly, rather bored with this personal talk—eager to know about the house and the sort of life she was going to lead—the things she was going to see and do. And Peter seemed unwilling to talk about that.

"What time is luncheon?" she asked.

Mrs. Perry—reaching the doorway in time to hear the last two speeches—smiled to herself, and shook her head—and sighed.

## II

LOUISE remained abroad five years, the first year traveling about with Mrs. Perry—absorbing—noting—studying everything—everything, that is, that Mrs. Perry desired her to study and absorb and note. Then she was placed in a French school—a school managed by a Frenchwoman of noble birth and excellent social position—whose splendor had fled with her wealth. Here she remained for two years.

Then, lest she become *too* French for American consumption, she was sent to England, where the French veneer was softened, enriched, corrected and polished by English governesses and the English people to whom she was presented. She looked on at English life—from the nursery, of course—for a year or more—and at seventeen, venturing to a really grown-up dance with a daughter of the Marquise of Kannesbury, and finding herself something of a sensation, she wrote of the event innocently enough to Mrs. Perry—and was forthwith haled homeward without delay. Mrs. Perry was not ambitious for an international alliance.

In the five years of her exile Louise had traveled a great deal—always in the care of chaperons and instructors. She had learned to converse interestingly. She had been encouraged to develop an individuality—of a sort. But her mind, of course, was kept within well ordered, conventional bounds—as

a pretty garden is cut and clipped and confined; and the most relentless, untiring attention had been given the care of her person.

At eighteen she was tall and slender and wonderfully graceful—with a perfectly developed form, matchless skin and hair and teeth, and the slim ankles and small hands and feet that are supposed to indicate good blood. Her nose was still short and straight; her lips retained the full-curved innocence of childhood; her eyes were still big and brilliant and deep blue—bright with interest and enthusiasm—eager for life—or soft and mysterious with dreams—according to her mood. Her head was carried with distinction. And she had an air—the indistinguishable something that sets apart the aristocrat.

Descending the gangway, a slim, straight figure in blue—with Fanchon behind her, and the stewards running about with handbags and grips—she was easily the most distinguished figure among the returning passengers. From the wharf, Cynthia Perry watched her, with tears of excitement and pride in her eyes—and on her lips already a taste of the sweetness of anticipation. She would have a career—this girl. She was made for it—to rule—to lead; and Cynthia Perry—who had made her—should be the power behind the throne—the master showman. She held out her arms with swift, unaccustomed tenderness, and Louise went into them contentedly.

"I'm so *glad* to be home," she said happily, "so very, unspeakably glad."

"To me, too," said Mrs. Perry, "it has seemed a long time."

"And how are Uncle Ogden—and Peter? And—my people—my *other* people? I may go down to see them, mayn't I?"

"By and by," promised Mrs. Perry vaguely. "Everyone is well. Peter is—quite grown up, I dare say—almost as grown up as you—but not so very much changed. He is still thin—and his hands and feet still bother him—and he has dared to grow a mustache—a red one that doesn't match his hair at all—but he's proud of it."



"Am I so very much changed?" asked Louise curiously.

"Not so greatly changed in appearance—a little older, of course, a little slenderer, too—and tremendously improved in carriage—in poise—in manner. And—changed since I left you, you mean—or since you came to me—out of the practical South? Can you still cook and sew and make beds and tend babies?"

"N-no—I'm afraid not," said the girl, smiling. "*I could* do all of those things once, couldn't I? I suppose one's interests vary with one's surroundings. Down South there was nothing else to occupy me—I *had* to be interested in the household. And—I wasn't awake yet—I didn't know what was inside me—I was just a little girl trying to grow up; and naturally I tried to be like mother. Poor mother!" She finished with a little wistful sigh, her eyes shadowy.

"You have declared, of course?" asked Mrs. Perry. "Come, then. We'll leave Fanchon and Walters to look after the luggage. The car is here."

They moved down the pier slowly, Louise with her arm slipped through her aunt's.

"And do you know what's inside you now?" asked Mrs. Perry, starting the conversation again at the point from which she wished it to proceed.

"Not very much that's useful," said Louise sadly. "A boundless love of life and the good things it holds—a bundle of pretty tricks and accomplishments. Can you read my usefulness in my face?"

"No—you are safe. No one who looks at your face will ever attempt to read it—or if he does, he will read only wonders written there. For men are the only ones who count, and they see what they want to see—in a woman."

"You aren't standing up for our sex very valiantly," said Louise reproachfully.

"We can admit the truth to each other," said Mrs. Perry good-naturedly. "Naturally, I fight like the mischief if a man dares to insinuate it. Women, my dear, are either deceitful cats who haven't a principle—or else

they are brainless dummies. Never trust them—the good Lord gave them their pretty appealing ways to cover the deficiencies underneath."

"You speak like a man," said Louise, laughing.

"Thank you—*that's* a compliment worth hearing. Thank heaven, I think like a man, too—usually. Tell me about your gowns—the woman of me, you see, has got to come out."

"I've brought heaps—as you directed—mostly from Paris—but a few from London. There are *some* attractive shops there—run invariably by Frenchmen or Americans, I'll admit—"

"I know them," said her aunt, nodding. "French workmanship—and English or American taste. A good combination. How many trunks did you bring?"

"About—oh, six, I think—and a few hat boxes. I didn't bother with boots and slippers. Fanchon advised me not to. She thought I should do better here. They really can't make comfortable foot-gear that looks well, godmother." It was her own especial pet name for Mrs. Perry—a name born in the first glow of her ecstatic delight as life opened before her young eyes—life golden with possibilities, which Mrs. Perry had made possible.

"Six trunks—I'm disappointed. That is not a great deal. We shall have to supplement your wardrobe here."

"They are very *large* trunks," said the girl, smiling reminiscently. "I've an idea you'll think I've a deal too much—when you see the bills."

"The bills are Ogden's affair," said Mrs. Perry. "And he never complains so long as I keep him comfortable and refrain from interfering with his own peculiar eccentricities. I detect a woman's hand in the existing marriage arrangement, my dear. It is so ingeniously one-sided—so fiendishly contrived to appeal to the poor man's domestic sentiments—to strike his weakness. We make them pay dearly for any comfort we bring them—especially in our world. Have you ever thought that a servant at forty dollars a month could make the home comfortable enough?"



"But the love of a woman," said Louise—"surely *that* is worth something."

"My dear," said Mrs. Perry calmly, "I believe the time has come to disclose a curious fact to you. This is a rather odd place for confessions, but—truth will out! There is no such thing as love."

"No such thing as *love*?" cried Louise incredulously.

"No. What is commonly called love is—just passion—the passion that causes animals to mate."

"Godmother! You are jesting! You can't be serious. Why, I've seen people—older people—devoted to each other. Surely—"

"That's just the affection bred by association and the enjoyment of certain common memories. When I say 'there is no such thing as love,' I mean there is not one man destined for some one woman. I mean that any woman can be happy with any man—can so adapt herself that she will in time achieve such a state that the world will say she 'loves' him. It *must* be so, my dear—don't you see? Because women can't propose marriage. We've got to wait until we're chosen. Oh, of course we can usually attract a man we care to attract—but—usually we attract one that our heads commend—not one that our hearts fancy."

"Hearts! Piffle! We haven't any. We're a selfish lot—got to be. A woman's marriage is her career. No one blames a man for being ambitious and wanting to do the best possible thing for himself in the way of a career. Why blame a woman for wanting to marry well?"

"I never knew before that you are mercenary," said the girl slowly.

"What's mercenary—fond of money? I *am* fond of it, of course. I'm intelligent. I know what it is to do without it. Your mother, my dear, is doing without it."

Louise was silent—wide-eyed, frowning slightly.

"What you call love," went on Mrs. Perry gravely, "is a mighty uncomfortable commodity—after a while. It en-

slaves. It is exacting. It demands—endlessly. And it hurts. It brings as much pain—more pain than joy. For jealousy always walks hand in hand with it. And jealousy is a monster that destroys one's peace of mind. Wise women laugh at this talk about love and marry sensibly—marry someone able to care for them—someone strong and big and admirable—of average good nature and possessed of a sense of humor. This man they study closely—until they learn each little turn and twist in his disposition. Then they satisfy his needs. In this way they rule—for the woman who follows this clever plan makes herself indispensable—or apparently indispensable. And after a time a devotion grows between them—a warm friendliness—a steady, reliable, peaceful sort of bond—that is to the violent, unchecked passion that some call love as heaven is to hell!"

"Then a wise woman calmly, coldly selects from a number the man most satisfactory in every way—and calmly marries him?" suggested Louise gravely.

"Certainly. Why not? No matter how you may crave chocolate creams—you don't attempt to live on them, do you? Because you know they can't support life—you know where a diet of chocolate creams would leave you. Nor would you attempt to go out into a storm dressed in a chiffon ballgown—although you might prefer chiffon ballgowns to any other sort of dress. Because you know what poor protection a chiffon ballgown would be in rough weather. But you've had to train yourself—to discipline yourself—to learn that what you prefer is not always what is wisest and best for you. So you must discipline yourself in your taste for men. There are a lot of ineligible that may seem more attractive. They may make love to you more appealingly. They may dance better, sing better, talk better; but will they wear better? That's the really important point. One doesn't select a husband for a night—or a dinner—or a dance. One selects him for life—for anything that may come—for storms as well as sunshine—"



"I'm afraid," sighed Louise softly, "I'm childishly idealistic."

"I hope so," said Mrs. Perry blithely. "It wouldn't do for you to be expressing such ideas as I have expressed. You are too young to be sensible and cold. Keep your illusions—or, at least, keep the shining luster they give your eyes—the fascination they lend you."

Louise leaned back silent and thoughtful—a little troubled.

"What would have become of me," she asked wonderingly, "if you had not taken me?"

"What becomes of every girl with impractical, dreaming parents or guardians? Shipwreck! A life of struggling—trying to idealize life—and its material conditions. Love and Jealousy and Man and Wife are rather a crowd to live peacefully in one little house—especially after Passion the Peacemaker moves. You'll find he frequently takes Love with him. That leaves only Jealousy—and plenty of room for Nagging and Impatience and Quarreling and Disagreement."

"Still," sighed Louise thoughtfully, "it must hurt—to deny yourself—to *think* you have found Love—and to shut him out—to deprive yourself of the chance. It must always seem to you that *you* might be the exception—the one pair in a million—who might have both love and happiness."

"But love *prevents* happiness," said Mrs. Perry. "Because it demands so much. It is hard, of course, to deny oneself anything one wants—chocolate creams, or chiffon ballgowns, or a handsome man who dances well and talks well and makes love adorably—and fades into insignificance at the first hard knock life deals him. And the thought you mention—the thought that *you* may be the exception—that is the siren light that leads to the rocks of destruction. It is on the strength of that thought, of course, that foolish women marry where their first undisciplined fancy dictates."

"But—" began Louise, and stopped as the motor drew up before Cynthia Perry's home.

"I feel as though I'm an innocent little bird just venturing to peep out

into an unknown world," said the girl, with an uncertain smile. "It's been so—so safe and secure in my nest. I've never really had to think at all."

"Don't begin," said Cynthia. "There's really no need. I'll see to it that when you leave my nest it will be to go to another equally safe and secure."

Louise sighed as the footman opened the door of the limousine.

### III

PETER turned up at teatime—a tall, angular, very thin young man of nineteen—still sallow-skinned and freckled, with almost unnaturally keen gray eyes, dark brown hair slicked straight back and a small, short-clipped mustache of a distinctly reddish hue. His nose had grown astoundingly. It was no longer thick and stumpy, but quite brazenly Roman, and his chin and forehead were becoming equally thick-hewn and prominent. He had an interesting face, altogether—a face that promised much. Behind him came an older man—a man of about twenty-five or six—a man of finer proportions, infinitely more pleasing aspect. He had dark eyes and dark hair and skin of a pale olive hue and very red lips. His eyebrows were finely drawn and his lashes were thick and long, and he had very nervous, well formed, capable hands. Both carried books beneath their arms—and as they appeared in the doorway, Cynthia Perry hailed them with a bow and a glance of affectionate amusement.

"Hail the learned!" she cried, and presented them to Louise with tremendous gravity. "Your cousin Peter Perry, Louise—a most studious youth—wise beyond his generation—and excelling also in sprinting. Sprinting is running about half dressed and braving pneumonia in order to win useless silver cups and medals along with the approbation of the college world. And Mr. Terence Krane—an artist—a growing portrait painter. Miss Louise Hammond, gentlemen."

Peter shook hands carelessly—glanc-



ing once keenly over her—and abandoning her utterly, to kiss his mother and fall upon the plate of English crumpets. Krane lent to the business of handshaking the care and thought which was its due—and she was conscious of his firm, warm grip long after he had released her hand. And she was conscious of his dark eyes—the eyes of a dreamer—fixed gravely, curiously, almost questioningly upon her face.

"I hadn't intended to let anyone meet her until Thursday," said Mrs. Perry conversationally, "but I suppose it would have been impossible to keep her from you, Terry. Terry," she added by way of explanation to Louise, "is my find—a sort of son by adoption. Later on you must see the portrait he has made of me."

"Not of you," put in Peter grimly; "you should say the portrait Terry made of your 'might have been.' That's what Terry paints—"

"I had hoped," said Terry, unsmiling, "that it might show her the error of her ways—but it hasn't."

"Do you find her so very wicked?" asked Louise. "So very far below the—'might have been'?"

"Not wicked—only foolish. There is no such thing as wickedness, I think," said Krane. "Only wisdom and folly. And—aren't we all a good deal below the—'might have been'?"

"I suppose so," said Louise. "Still—we're rather nice, you know. I like the world and the people in it."

"So do I," said Terry with a smile.

"I *don't*," said Peter grimly.

"Terry sees the 'might have been,'" said Mrs. Perry, laughing, "and Peter sees the 'ought to be.'"

"What do *you* see?" asked Louise.

"I see things as they *are*, of course." Peter smiled.

"And what do *I* see?" asked Louise.

"You see as I see," said Krane hopelessly.

"You *used* to see as I did," said Peter, "but I shouldn't be at all surprised if you've been spoiled over there."

"*You*," said Mrs. Perry simply, "have not yet begun to see at all. How you will see when your eyes open, nobody knows."

"Be an optimist," said Krane. "One gets much more out of life that way. Even if the bubbles burst, one has enjoyed the beauty of the bubbles."

"Be a pessimist," said Peter. "It spares you lots of disappointments."

"Follow my footsteps along the road between," said Mrs. Perry.

"That combines the disadvantages of our systems," said Peter.

"I suppose—after all, circumstances will direct my wavering feet," said Louise, smiling.

"Are you so weak that circumstances can dominate you?" asked Krane.

"Don't circumstances always dominate one? Isn't all our knowledge of life gained from the circumstances that surround us? And doesn't our knowledge of life control us?"

"I, for one, fly at serious discussions," said Mrs. Perry, rising. "Coming, Louise? We must look over your gowns and find something for you to wear tonight. And dinner isn't far off."

"May I finish my tea?" she asked.

"Yes—but don't stay on here chattering. When you've finished, come to my study."

Louise nodded—and Cynthia Perry moved off.

"Well?" said she, smiling from Peter to Terry, when the three of them were left together.

"Well?" said Terry Krane.

Peter considered her.

"Do we like her, Terry?" he asked idly.

"Isn't it rather early to decide?" asked Louise. "It wouldn't be quite fair to me, would it?"

"Might give you an advantage," said Peter grimly. "You couldn't be all you look."

"Why?" she was amused. "Do I look so nice?"

"Very nice—very healthy and *clean*. That's the best part. And your head is well set and shaped as if there might be brains inside."

She laughed outright. He had a funny way of paying compliments.

"There are none, however," she said.

"I've contracted the habit of not thinking."



"Most women do," said he. "That's what makes them enduring. An elephant attempting to climb a tree would be a ludicrous object."

"I detect your mother's influence there," said Louise. "Do you adopt all of her opinions ready made?"

"Only the ones that appeal to me," said he calmly. "One has to adopt somebody's theories ready made. It would be impossible to make new ones, you know—the world and everything in it—is so old."

"And Peter," said Terry, "is quite the oldest thing in it."

Peter smiled. His mouth had a whimsical twist to it at such times, and a sort of radiance kindled in his eyes when he was amused.

"I suppose," said he, changing the subject suddenly as he leaned back in his chair and regarded her, "that you have unlearned all the useful, sensible things you knew when you left here?"

"The useful, sensible things?" she repeated wonderingly.

"Cooking and bedmaking and so on."

"Oh," she cried. "How odd that you should remember! Yes, I'm afraid I have."

"And instead—"

"I've music—both piano and vocal—French, German, Spanish and Italian—as well as English—I've the art of conversation—I've history—I've—my goodness, any number of accomplishments!"

"It's a pity," said he sadly; "and you might have made a really splendid wife for some chap."

"Might—have?" gasped Louise.

"Surely."

"But—probably the man I marry will be able to keep servants for bed-making and cooking. Don't you think so? And now I can be a companion to him—a—"

"Oh—I see," said Peter innocently; "you are going to talk French to him at breakfast—and German at luncheon—and Italian at tea—and Spanish at dinner—and English now and then by way of variety. And when he's trying to think or to sleep—you'll sing and play to him. And when you've talked

out all the information you've acquired in the last five years—when you've exhausted all the art of conversation you've learned, I suppose—why, you'll begin all over again—or offer him what small talk you've picked up meanwhile. You remember you've cultivated the habit of not thinking."

She smiled—but faintly—and her cheeks were flushed.

"I'm afraid I'm not going to like you," she said.

"I'm sorry," said he. "I thought you knew—I don't always mean what I say."

She rose at that, her smile becoming more assured. And Peter and Krane got instantly to their feet, too.

"Of one thing," said Krane gravely, "you can be sure: this husband of yours—of whom you were speaking—he will know himself richer than all of the rest of the world together—for he will be able always to look at you. And, possessing this privilege, he will want nothing more."

"Thank you," she said, laughing outright. "I think you mean to be nice. But you've given me the impression—between you—that I am a brainless doll. I hate you both."

And then she turned and fled from them, leaving Krane scarlet with astonishment and horror—and Peter vastly amused.

"I could cut in—and spoil mother's air castles," he said. "I actually believe I could. But shall I?"

"What do you mean?" asked Krane wonderingly.

"What do you think of her?" Peter parried.

"I think," said he in a curious voice, "that she is the loveliest girl I have ever seen. And so—I am afraid of her."

"Afraid of her?"

"Afraid of—what she may do to my life."

"What's this rot?" asked Peter grimly.

"I feel as if I'd been to heaven," said Terry gravely.

Four days later Louise was formally presented to society.



She had met no one in the interval, although she had been seen with the Perrys at the Opera and the theater, and the fame of her beauty had spread over the town. So the day of her *début* found her overwhelmed with floral offerings from the men she was to meet—and that night found them, one by one, taking her hand—and looking into her eyes—and leaving their hearts at her feet. She wore a gown of soft white satin—heavy with gold and pearls, and she held an armful of American Beauties which Cynthia Perry had given her. Cynthia, triumphant in black embroidered chiffon, stood beside Louise and dropped a word or two in the girl's ear about each arrival—and Ogden and Peter and Terry Krane wandered about disconsolately like lost souls seeking a refuge where they could be undisturbed. All of New York—at least all of Cynthia's New York—was there, and bachelors of every age from twenty to sixty hovered around Louise and fought for dances, and besought her not to forget them, and made her repeat their names over and over so that she must surely remember. And one man proposed to her on the spot, declaring that first come should really be first served. All in all, it was the night of her life (at any rate, the first night)—and after the last motor had driven off—as she sank down upon the lowest step—in a pool of rumpled satin and gold—she sighed wearily and propped her head upon two aching hands.

"I've said 'Good night' and 'Thank you' and 'Yes' and 'No'—until my head spins," she said, "and I've danced until my feet ache—and I've shaken hands—all kinds of hands—until I've no feeling left in any of my fingers; but I'm terribly happy."

"I am glad of that, anyway," said Cynthia.

"And I was too rushed to notice that neither Uncle Ogden—nor Terry nor Peter asked me to dance," she went on, smiling at the figure of Peter, leaning upon the balustrade up above and watching from there.

He made no answer.

"And I should like to know who is

Livingstone Morris." She looked up at Cynthia Perry curiously. Cynthia had an expression similar to the famous cat who ate the bird.

"The richest bachelor in New York—the biggest matrimonial prize—the man for whom mothers have been angling for years," called Peter.

"Why?" asked Cynthia.

"I think he's interested in me," said Louise.

"You would just suit him," said Peter. "Ornamental and accomplished—with a figure to show off the clothes he can buy you—and the tact and manners to uphold his position in society. You couldn't do better."

"Then I shall marry him," she said sweetly.

#### IV

THE famous Miss Hammond—the latest society beauty—fortune's most recent favorite—descended from her new blue-lined motor at the door of the Perry house, and starting up the steps; came suddenly face to face with Mr. Terence Krane coming down. Miss Hammond stopped, as he attempted to hurry by with a nod and a flush and a hastily doffed hat; and in her eyes shone a light of determination.

"Are you in a very great hurry?" asked Miss Hammond curiously, fixing him with her deep blue eyes. She was in blue—in a pale blue afternoon frock of embroidered blue satin—the skirt close-clinging—with a train—a wide blue satin hat to match, with a single long ostrich plume of shaded orchid tones, and a chiffon muff with a cluster of orchids fastened to it. Naturally, she was ravishing—perfect from her brown silk slippers to the fluffy tip of her willow plume. And she knew it. And Terry Krane knew it—and she knew that he did, too.

"Are you catching a train or saving anyone's life—or anything?" she asked, as he halted irresolutely. He glanced up at her with a sort of appeal—or something ridiculously like it—kindling in his dark eyes.

"No-o," he said. "I—it doesn't matter."



"Then—would you mind coming back with me? I should like to talk to you for a few minutes. It's—rather important."

He followed meekly without a word, as she led the way back up the steps and into the wide hall. The doorman was in the rear in his little office. There was nobody about. The famous Miss Hammond seated herself upon the broad settee by the fireplace and gazed meditatively up at him. He stood before her, hat in hand, a curious expression in his eyes—an expression she could not quite fathom.

"I want to know," she said at last, conscious of his increasing restlessness, "why you run away from me."

"Run away from you?" he repeated in tones which were intended to indicate surprise, but which really said "Please don't mention it!" instead. Miss Hammond smiled.

"Don't deny it," she said. "You are really too truthful naturally to attempt to lie. You do run away from me, and I think you do it purposely. I've noticed it ever since that first day I met you. I can't get a chance to talk to you or to know you at all. What is there about me you find so distasteful?"

"Distasteful?" he repeated gravely. "Surely you cannot think that!"

"What else am I to think—from the evidence?" She gazed at him innocently. "I don't like to be disliked. I want everyone to—be interested in me, and—to find me nice. So don't think there is anything personal in my concern."

"No danger," he said softly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"It doesn't matter," he said. "What difference can it make to you whether or not I like you? As a matter of fact, I—I *do* think you are *very* nice. But—"

"But you like me better at a distance?"

"N-no!"

She looked perplexed.

"You have such a frank look," she said. "But you aren't frank at all."

"I am."

"You are not being frank with me."

He looked harassed, uncomfortable, embarrassed.

"Frankness in this case," he said, "would gain neither of us anything. I'd really rather not discuss it. You have so many men about you always, it surely can't matter that I stay away. I'm of such small importance anyway—socially, at least."

"But it *does* matter," she said, raising her wide eyes seriously.

"Nonsense."

"It *does*."

"Why?"

"Because I want to know you . . . I think—we could be—very good friends."

"We couldn't," he said simply. "We could *never* be friends."

"I don't like your saying that," she said slowly. "Why do you say it?"

"I'm sorry. It's quite true. You see, we'd much better have let the subject rest."

"But I won't. I intend knowing what is behind it all. Tell me!"

He was silent—gazing hopelessly up the stairway and down the hall for the interruption that would not come.

"Why could we never be friends?" she asked.

He met her eyes with sudden resolution flaming in his. She started slightly—confronting a new man, a man in whom timidity was absent, a man fearless and frank.

"We could never be friends," he said, "because I loathe and detest and despise the sort of girl you are—yes, and pity, too. I didn't want to tell you this—but you compel me. You are a senseless mannikin—a doll—designed to please the eye and content the ear—a frivolous, surface creature of foam. And the most distressing part of it is that you *willingly* are these things. You've shut your mind and your heart up in a box and locked it—and you've hidden the key. You could be a real woman, and you prefer to be a beautiful toy. And I despise that in you. And sooner or later you are going to sell yourself to the highest bidder—as street women sell themselves—only not so pardonably



—for you lack the compulsion of necessity."

He stopped suddenly, as she sprang to her feet, her head thrown back, her hands clenched, her eyes blazing and wet with angry tears.

"Good God! I didn't mean to say that to you," he said. "I wouldn't hurt you for the world. Forgive me! I—I'm sorry. I didn't intend to say it—but—it's been boiling inside me—and boiling—and boiling. That's why I was unwilling to begin."

She said nothing—made no sign that she had heard, but passing him slowly, essayed to mount the stairs.

"Wait!" he cried appealingly. "Please wait. I haven't finished. There's something I must tell you—now—something different."

With one hand clinging to the balustrade, her back to him, she mounted the first step.

He strode across to the stair rail, reached up and caught her hand and held it between his, so firmly that, struggling as she would, she could not free herself; but she did not look at him.

"I can't take back what I said," he went on in a strange, low tone, "because it's true. I *know* it's true. I feel it in my *heart*—and if I should say I didn't mean it I should be lying to you. But I can say I'm sorry I've hurt you. And I can tell you—the other reason—why I've run away from you. Perhaps it will be by way of revenge upon me."

Still she did not turn, but she ceased to struggle. Her hand lay passive in his now—soft, smooth, warm, pulsing with eager life.

"I am afraid of you," he said. "I haven't *dared* to know you—because I should love you. Already I—I think too much about you. And to love you—would be madness, because if I should love you it would be with all my heart and soul and strength, and—that would mean such agony for me. Now, perhaps, you will understand why I dared think the truth about you—why I dared tell it to you."

She turned her head and looked down at him wonderingly. Her lashes were still wet; her lips quivered.

"You are making that up—to please me," she said uncertainly. "You—" But there she stopped for, looking at him, she had realized that he had not been making it up. His eyes were afire; his face was glorified, transfigured by the sudden revealing of his passion.

"Oh!" she said rather blankly, and drew away her hand. She turned and sank down upon the step, looking at him through the stair posts, from under tangled wet lashes.

"I'm sorry," she said, instinctively trying with sympathy to repair the mischief she had wrought.

He said nothing; and a little pause fell between them.

"If you think such things about me," she began at last, gravely, "how could you possibly love me?"

"I can't help it. It isn't the superficial side of you that I love, you see. It's the *real* you—that I detect underneath."

"But the superficial me is the real me," she said sadly, shaking her head.

"It isn't. You know it isn't."

"It is," she insisted. "You idealize me. You make up an imaginary person of wonderful attributes to match the physical charms I have. Truly, there isn't any depth to me, Terry. I haven't a soul or ideals or anything like that. The best of me is on top."

"It isn't," he said.

"It is, Terry. I wish it weren't. But it is."

"Do you really wish it weren't, then?"

"Y-yes."

"Will you marry me—if I can prove to you that you are all I believe you? I've next to nothing a year. I have to work hard for everything I get. There will probably be no motor cars or velvets or satins—or jewels—for many years to come."

"If you awaken the sort of person you claim is sleeping inside me—I shall not mind, shall I?"

"No," he said. "That's true."

"When shall you begin to wake her?" asked Miss Hammond curiously.

"Tomorrow. You must give me some of your time. It is necessary that we



have some long uninterrupted talks together."

"My time is taken up mostly—afternoons and evenings for weeks ahead."

"How about mornings?" he asked.

"Mornings are free—but—godmother will be astonished. She might even try to interfere."

"She probably would," said he reflectively. "Couldn't I paint your portrait—as an excuse?"

"I'd have to bring a chaperon to your studio."

"Your maid?"

"Fanchon! Good!" She smiled. "Can you paint in the mornings? Auntie always has massage and things."

"To be sure."

She rose and held out her hand.

"It's settled then—if you are certain you want to risk it. Have you thought of the disappointment—if I prove to be only a doll, really, without a soul?"

"I'll risk it! But have you considered what the awakening may do to you?"

"I'll risk it!" she said.

They shook hands, looking thoughtfully deep into each other's eyes, and slowly drew apart—Terry to dash down the steps and off through the twilight, planning his portrait with a light heart—Louise to sink down before her dressing table, the door locked behind her, and consider her beautiful reflection with wide, meditative eyes.

Followed three weeks of happiness for Terry—for she came every morning at nine o'clock to his studio in Washington Square, with Fanchon to satisfy the proprieties—and while he painted her, they talked. He had chosen an unusual arrangement for the portrait. In her white and gold *début* gown, she stood looking into a queer antique mirror of dull, twisted gold. And in this mirror her reflection was to be seen—but between the face looking in and the face in the mirror a curious difference existed. The Miss Hammond looking at her reflection was cold, haughty, reserved, beautiful, perfectly poised, a creature of civilization. The reflected face was warm, alight, the eyes straightforward, deep and true; the hair was

not quite so perfectly coiffed; the full lips curved upward a bit at the ends instead of down. It was the face of a natural girl—the face of nature unhampered by civilization. A mind looked out from it—a soul shone through. And Terry, warming to his task, fighting for his happiness, painted as he had never painted before.

And as he worked, they talked. He had no definite scheme for awakening her. They talked about everything under the sun—subjects, mostly, that would appeal to her imagination, stir her to individual thought. They would have long discussions of hypothetical cases.

"What would you do if you married Morris—and he lost his money and his legs?"

"Work for him, I suppose," she said. "That would be only fair, don't you think?"

"But wouldn't you be happier living on little with a man you loved?"

"Suppose I married you and you tired of me," she said—"wouldn't that be worse? Besides, he isn't likely to lose either money or legs—certainly not both at once. And if I marry him, I will love him—in my own way."

"What is your way?"

"I shall admire him, respect him, honor him, be true to him, put myself in harmony with him, learn his needs and content him."

"Do you think all that will satisfy him, if he loves you? That's a motor car without an engine. Apparently what you want—but upon examination not the same at all. That's buying real things with counterfeit money."

"Nonsense. He doesn't expect a 'grand passion.' He doesn't *want* it. He will expect to have his nights at the club—his freedom—the liberty to enjoy his own life undisturbed by my advent. If I loved him, I should probably want every minute of his time, his every thought, his unceasing attention and care. I should want him only—of all the world. Do you suppose Livingstone Morris would care for such a state of things? Certainly not. He will want other company—other companions. I



will preside over his household—bear his name gracefully—wear his family jewels and stunning clothes—become a leader in his set—and form a beautiful, accomplished, amiable companion when he needs me. And so we shall be happy together.”

“What a travesty on happiness!” he groaned, glaring around the side of his easel. “What a hollow mockery! I pity him—if he really loves you.”

“He doesn’t,” said she placidly. “Naturally, he doesn’t. He’s nearly forty. I believe he’s thirty-nine, to be exact. He’s had his love affairs—numbers of them. He’s been about. He’s seen life. Now he’s willing to settle down, marry and become a respected member of society.”

“And you are willing to take him on such terms—for the sake of his millions—the gewgaws he can buy you?”

“But don’t you *see*,” she persisted, “he’ll never be able to make me suffer. I shall never care greatly what sort of mood he is in. His smile won’t give me joy, but his scowls won’t drive the life from my heart, either. He won’t be jealous of me—not, I mean, as a *loving* husband would be. And he won’t tire of me, because I shall always be the graceful, accomplished woman that he married. Even when I’m old, I shall be handsome—because I’ve an even disposition. Don’t you see? It’s a business proposition.”

“But it shouldn’t be,” he protested vigorously.

“Everything in life is a business proposition,” she said. “Everything is: ‘I’ll do this because I gain *this*—or I’ll do this if you’ll do that.’”

He couldn’t reason with her. His arguments sounded like the sentimental rhapsodizing of a callow youth. He *felt* that there is such a thing as life—and that it is the best in life—but he couldn’t prove it by argument. So, in desperation, he thought of a new plan.

She had consented to stay to luncheon—and Fanchon had been sent to order it at the nearby café. The instant the door closed behind her, he threw down his palette and brush and approached the model stand.

“Suppose,” he said, “that some great trouble should overtake you?”

She smiled, understanding at once to what he referred.

“I should go to my husband with it, of course. There would be perfect understanding between us.”

“There can be no perfect understanding without love,” he said.

“Love, love, love,” she prattled. “You are always speaking of it. Is it so important, then? *What* is it?”

“Do you want to know?” he asked oddly.

“Yes.”

He swept her suddenly into his arms—before she could suspect his intention—before she could cry out. He held her crushed against him, her hands at her sides, her form losing its sudden rigidity, as his lips touched her hair and eyes and lips and throat and shoulders. They were hot, those lips, with divine fire—and where they touched a thrill ran through her. She sobbed once—a frightened little sob—and lay still against him, trembling.

“*This* is love,” he said hoarsely, “this madness—that makes me forget my manners, everything but that I am a man and that I love you.” He was gasping for breath, his face white, his eyes burning over her. “This is love—that makes my lips burn you; and this—that makes me want to crush you until we two shall be welded into one. Hear my heart. Love makes it thump that way. This is love. Do you feel it now? Do you know it? You must—you *must!*”

She was still frightened into silence, her heart running wild, her form trembling.

“Love,” he said, “is what makes me thirst for your lips. It’s what makes me crave your nearness. It’s what makes me ache to guard you and care for you and serve you. It’s what devours me—to own you for *mine*—mine before all the world! Do you understand now?”

She made no answer.

He drew back and looked down into her face. Her long silken lashes hid her eyes; her face flamed with the glow of dawn.



"Tell me," he said, "do you understand—now?"

"Yes," she whispered, catching her breath.

He released her—stood looking at her frowningly.

"What is it?" he asked.

She stood motionless, her head drooping, her hands hanging loosely at her sides, her eyes half closed.

"I—don't know," she said, uncertainly, with the hint of a sob in her straining breath. "I feel—weak, very weak, and faint—and—strange."

"I've frightened you," he said. "There is some brandy here—somewhere." His passion fled as he grew concerned. She shuddered and put up her hands.

"No," she said. And then—half to herself: "I feel as if everything had stopped—as though I were standing in space, with nothing about me anywhere." She closed her eyes and shook her head, her brows drawn down, as though she would banish some ugly phantom that manaced her.

"I think," he said in a low voice, "you are awake at last."

"No, no!" she cried. And again, more passionately, "No, *no!*"

He laughed, triumphantly, happily.

"Yes!" he cried. "You are awake! Be brave. Face the issue."

Fanchon opened the door and stepped in—her sharp eyes speeding from Louise to Terry standing over her. Louise raised helpless, appealing eyes to her face.

"Fanchon!" she cried. "I want to go home. I want to go home!"

"Miss Hammond is ill," said Terry, as the Frenchwoman rushed across to throw herself upon her knees at Louise's feet.

"It is nothing," said the girl with an effort, "*nothing*." Then she burst into hysterical sobs, her face hidden in Fanchon's breast.

"Please to leave us, monsieur," begged Fanchon, appealing to Terry; and rapidly changing his coat and seizing his hat and topcoat, he went—out into the sunshine, with victory singing in his heart.

## V

LOUISE went to her room and Fanchon relieved her of her clothes, bathed her face with toilet water and brushed out her thick hair. Then, in a soft white negligée, all accordion-pleated chiffon and cream lace, she threw herself upon the bed and closed her eyes. Fanchon drew the curtains and reported to Mrs. Perry that Miss Hammond had a severe headache and was trying to sleep.

Undisturbed, then, the girl lay still for hours, staring into the darkness. At first she did not think at all—consecutively. Odd memories, disconnected pictures, strayed through her head. Half-forgotten incidents of her childhood and of her years abroad floated back to her. And she pursued these, more or less indifferently, until the tumult within her ceased and she became comparatively calm. And then—at length—she let her thoughts wander on to their goal. She clasped her hands behind her head and tried to think sensibly. It must be love—this wild, overwhelming passion that held her in its grip. It must be love. But would it last? The thought tormented her. She had always been careless—happy-go-lucky—fickle. She rarely thought of anyone not within her immediate range of vision. Even her mother and father and Iris and Dickie and Madge—they meant little to her. They had passed out of her life. She was still fond of them—when she remembered their existence—but they meant little to her. She would have been different if she could have been—but she had always been fickle.

Now she wondered if this sudden surrender to Terry was worth what she must give up for it? She wondered if it would endure. Reflecting, she realized that from her first glimpse of him he had been a definite factor in her thoughts. She had been aware—always—of his coming and going, of his expressions, his opinions, his attitudes. It may have been, originally, his indifference or his apparent indifference that piqued her, aroused her vanity, at-



tracted her attention; but afterward, it had surely been the personality of the man that held her.

She fretted over the admission. She fought down the thought that she must decide—whether she would suffer and give him up—and marry Livingstone Morris—or give up the glittering alliance—and marry poor Terry Krane—on next to nothing a year. She tried to make herself believe that there could be no question of choice. And still—love spoke in an always firmer voice—demanding to be heard.

She tossed about restlessly, now lying flat, her head upon her hands, her elbows buried in the pillows, now stretched flat upon her back, frowningly regarding the pink Cupids on the pale blue ceiling above her head. Her hair was in a cascade of pale gold curls about her face and over her shoulders; her cheeks were flushed, her eyes unbelievably big and starlike, her lips full. Beneath the folds of her robe, her bosom stirred.

If, she thought, she could only be sure! If she could know that his touch would always thrill her—that his eyes would always kindle fire in her heart—that his step, his voice, his smile, would always send her heart galloping! Would they? Would they? Or would the madness die? Would the fever end? Would life grow calm and cold and even and ordinary again afterward? And would she wake from her blissful delirium to find herself in a flat, or a tiny house, with housework to do, and cheap gowns to wear, and more children than she could afford to rear? And would Terry find her out—learn to look into her shallow mind and foolish heart; and would he be overcome by disgust—and would he tire? Would he? Would he? Could she hold him—deprived of the setting which she needed in order to shine? Would he still think her beautiful—in an apron and a cheap kimono? And if he *did*, could he remember that—when she muddled the housekeeping bills and spent more than she should have—and couldn't learn to cook and clean and mend? She wondered if all of those things would come back to her,

or if she had been hopelessly spoiled. She wondered if even his love could make up to her for the luxuries she would be giving up—the luxuries to which she had become enslaved.

No, no—she couldn't ride in street cars and use cheap scented soaps and remnants and inferior cuts of meat. Her mother had done it, but her mother was made of different stuff. She would give him up. She would marry Livingstone Morris—and have five or six cars of her own and a yacht, and go abroad every season for her clothes, and become the leader of fashionable society in America. She would entertain kings and princes. Surely, that was her station. It would be absurd to let this madness ruin her life—this momentary madness—this foolish insanity that dreamers and sentimentalists call "love." It would be absurd. Livingstone Morris was a good man, a sensible, trustworthy man, a big, strong, healthy, clean-minded man. He was all a girl could ask. She would send Terry away. Let him take his kisses and his love words to someone more nearly his equal—to some girl who could be happy with him.

She sat up at the thought, staring across at herself in the mirror. Some other girl would lie in his arms as she had lain. Some other girl would lie against his heart and feel it beat. Some other girl would feel the fire of his kisses, of his slender fingers on her hair. Some other girl should have the right to his care and devotion—all her life—not only now but later on—when she was old and tired and—very much alone.

"No, no!" cried Louise wildly, springing up. "I couldn't endure it. I couldn't."

She crossed to the secretary, tossing back her bright hair, fumbling hastily for paper and ink and a pen. She sat down and wrote rapidly.

DEAREST TERRY:

*Dearest, dearest!* See what you've done. You've wakened me. You've set my heart afire. You've—you've made me love you. It is madness, Terry. It is. I'm afraid I shall not be happy with you. I'm not as wonderful a person as you make me out. But I can't give you up. I'll try to like being poor. I'll



try. Only—please be patient with me and good to me. And be gentle. Be lenient. I'm dreadfully spoiled and very horrid inside. Try not to fall out of love with me—when this first mad passion passes. Oh, Terry dear, I'm afraid—but I can't give you up. I can't!"

There came a soft knock at the door, and Cynthia Perry's voice, calling softly: "Louise."

She stopped writing—sat motionless, the pen in midair, her frightened, wide blue eyes fixed fascinatedly upon the door. "If I'm still," she thought, "maybe she'll think I'm asleep. Maybe she'll go away."

"Louise, dear!" called Cynthia insistently.

Louise leaped to her feet with a sudden accession of courage, crossed the room, her hair flying, her white negligée floating out around her, and unlocked the door.

"Yes," she said quietly.

Cynthia came in, regarding the girl's flushed cheeks and bright eyes keenly, casting a swift, appraising glance about the disordered room.

"What has happened?" she asked. She was in a riding habit of black, with a straight white collar and a wide-brimmed sailor hat, and she had not stopped in the hall to leave stock or boots.

"What makes you think anything has happened?"

"Well, you don't usually have headaches—and there's something in the air." She sniffed. "Toilet water, isn't it? Well? Don't parry."

Louise stood motionless an instant, thinking—then drew a great breath, and returning to her desk, handed Cynthia the letter. Cynthia took it—glanced once at the top line and once at Louise—and then she read it through. At the end, she stood regarding it thoughtfully.

"Well?" asked the girl, uncertainly.

"So it is to be Terry, eh? You've—decided?"

She returned the note as she spoke.

"Yes," said Louise in a low voice.

"I thought you hardly knew each other. I thought you scarcely ever came in contact."

"He's been painting my portrait—

mornings. It was to be a birthday surprise for you."

"I see. Whose idea?"

"His."

Cynthia drew a small gold cigarette case from somewhere, likewise a match-safe. She lighted a cigarette and inhaled.

"And he's been making love to you?"

Louise shrugged.

"And, naturally, you liked it," said Cynthia. "Your blood ran quickly. You thrilled—you rioted in new sensations. The thought that he is an ineligible—forbidden fruit—lent a dash of romance. So you are going to throw your future away."

"He loves me," said Louise.

"There is no such thing as love."

"There is. I know—because I love him."

Cynthia smiled.

"My dear child! Listen: You want him because it isn't sensible to want him. You want him because he's young and impressionable, because he makes love ardently, because he's a fascinating boy—and because he's the one sugar plum out of reach. We always want the sugar plums out of reach."

She sat down upon the edge of the bed and regarded the girl's flushed, downcast face with eyes that were quizzical but very kind.

"Have you forgotten the little talk we had the day you landed?" she asked. "A little talk about love?"

"No," said Louise in a low voice.

"Think of it now, then," said Cynthia Perry. "Your young affections require discipline. You are in a fair way to overeat yourself on chocolate creams. Pull up *hard*. And *think!* You and Terry are as unfitted for marriage as two mortals could be. He's poor and you are recklessly extravagant—ignorant of the value of money—impractical—"

"You made me this sort of creature!" cried the girl, with sudden passion.

"Hush! You mustn't take such a tone. I've had your welfare in mind always. That's why I'm troubling to interfere now. Your marriage to either Terry or Livingstone Morris can't affect me in any way."



"I'm sorry," said Louise in a low voice. "I owe you everything—every happiness I've ever had."

"That's all right," said Cynthia. "It's made me happy to do things for you, so I've benefited, too, you see. I hadn't a daughter and I've always wanted one. And your mother gave you to me—as a sort of substitute. And I've been the happier for it."

Louise said nothing.

"So, in advising you," said Cynthia, "I speak from the fullness of experience—as I would speak to a real daughter of my own. You and Terry haven't a chance for happiness together. You require what he can never give you—and he requires what you can never give him. Read your letter over. You say"—she reached for it and read—"I'm afraid I can't be happy with you. I'm not as wonderful a person as you make me out."

"You see—you realized the truth yourself. He's idealizing you. He hasn't the least conception of what you are really like. It isn't in him to understand a woman of your type. You are a butterfly. He doesn't recognize butterfly women. He thinks they are another sort—posing. You couldn't make a bee out of a butterfly by training—but that is precisely what he would try to do. And when you failed to make a good bee, he would lose patience. The divine madness that thrills you now never lasts. Look about you. What is going to happen when it goes? Can you harness a lion and a lamb together and expect them to draw a cart amicably? There is just as much difference in you two."

"But I love him," said Louise humbly. "If I give him up—I shall suffer." She was pleading—as a child might plead not to be hurt.

"Medicine that cures is usually nasty," said Cynthia. "If you want chocolate creams badly, and you know they will give you indigestion, you don't eat them, no matter how you dislike doing without. If giving up Terry hurts, think how much greater your agony would be if you married him—and made a failure of it. The lesser

evil is always the one to select, isn't it? We don't have pneumonia rather than take cough medicine—no matter how nasty it is. We know pneumonia is worse!"

"What shall I do?" asked Louise helplessly.

"Don't send him this note," said Cynthia, tearing it up. "Exactly what happened to precipitate this situation? Did he ask you to marry him?"

"No."

"Just made love to you?"

"Yes. We'd a compact that—if he could awaken a different side of me—what he calls the *real* me—I should marry him."

"Write him," said Cynthia, "that you are not sure of yourself. Say that you can't tell whether you are a new person or whether he's just discovered a new phase of you. And ask him please not to try to see you until you can think it out. Tell him it's for the sake of his happiness as well as yours. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said the girl in a low voice. She seated herself lifelessly at the desk and began to write—slowly—with long pauses in between the sentences. Mrs. Perry remained quietly smoking until the letter was done. Then she read it and approved it with a nod and a smile, inserted it in its envelope and rising, rang for Fanchon.

"Are you going to send it *now*?" asked Louise, weakening.

"Why not? Never play with difficult problems. Solve them at once and have it over. They get harder the longer you wait."

"I—suppose you are right," said Louise. "Oh, I know you are right. But it hurts me! It hurts me! I feel as if I am killing myself!"

"Discipline is always painful," said Cynthia. She delivered the note into Fanchon's hands.

"Send this at once—by messenger. That will do."

Fanchon disappeared, with a pitying glance from Louise to Mrs. Perry.

"What will he think?" asked Louise wretchedly.

"He'll think you are wise, and he'll



stay away for a day or two. By that time you must be able to meet him. Don't temporize. Don't deceive yourself. Don't pity yourself and think of him in secret and mourn for him and build day dreams, and don't keep wondering if you are deciding wisely. You have decided: keep that idea in mind. You have definitely decided—and nothing must alter your course. If you hope to be happy, you must do this."

"I will," said Louise, as firmly as she could.

"Then you'd better begin to dress," said Cynthia. "Livingstone Morris is dining here."

Louise nodded obediently, forcing her lips shut upon a sigh.

"What shall I wear?" she asked.

"White—something soft and simple and girlish. Isn't there a white silk crêpe?"

"Yes," said Louise. "Absolutely plain—except for tiny tuckings and folds and things. It's a Paquin."

"Wear it," said Cynthia.

She started absent-mindedly for the door.

"He hasn't proposed yet—Livingstone, I mean?"

"No," said Louise.

"But—he will?"

"Whenever I like," said the girl with the ghost of a smile.

"Tonight, then—if the Fates are willing," said Cynthia. "Once you are promised, you are fairly safe."

"So soon?" cried the girl wistfully. "Mayn't I wait just a little—to get used to the idea—to—"

"Don't temporize," said Cynthia. "You know what is best for you. Do it. It is a rather heroic treatment, but I think it best. You'll accept—if he asks you?"

"Yes," she answered lifelessly.

"And you'll let him speak—you'll help him to speak? You promise?"

"Yes," said Louise, with a sigh.

"Good," said Cynthia. And when she was safely outside the door, she sighed.

"If age had the daring of youth," she thought, "and youth the wisdom of age! What a combination! Nothing would be impossible!"

## VI

UPON the following day, Mrs. Perry announced the engagement of her niece, Louise Clavering Hammond, to Livingstone Morris. An engagement is twice as binding when it is announced. And Terry—reading the announcement in the evening papers—set out in hot haste for the Perry house—not daring to conceive the truth—eager for her to deny it. He saw only Mrs. Perry, who informed him gently that the engagement was a fact, and bade him go home and wait for a note from Louise. This note, which came presently, banished his last doubts.

## DEAR TERRY:

After all, you failed. The madness lasted only one little hour—then common sense returned. Don't mind very much, Terry. I am sorry for any suffering I may have caused you—but it is really better this way. It is, truly. I'm not in the least what you think me. You *couldn't* arouse a different sort of person in me, because there isn't a different sort there to arouse. So if you are wise you'll congratulate yourself upon a lucky escape. I might have married you—and then we'd both have been miserable for life. You are such a dreamer, Terry, such an artist, that you can't understand—but it's true; and some day you'll thank me for saving you.

With my sincerest wishes for your happiness,  
LOUISE C. HAMMOND.

She hadn't really meant all of those things—not then—but she wrote as Mrs. Perry directed, and Terry—never suspecting this little secret of authorship—went quite mad. Into Peter's wrathful ear he poured wild denunciations of devils in the likeness of angels—fiends who break men's hearts for the joy of the breaking.

And Peter listened as long as he could with patience—and then he got Terry divinely drunk and left him to forget his disappointment in slumber. But Terry couldn't sleep. He walked the floor for hours, alternately cursing her and calling upon her to live up to the glory of her womanhood and come back to him. He overlooked his own part in his unhappiness. He blamed her—and poor Livingstone Morris.

Upon that poor gentleman's head he upset the vials of his wrath, eventually,



in the excess of his passion and his liquor, indicting a letter to Mr. Morris, telling him that Louise didn't love him—that she was only marrying Morris for his money—and inclosing Louise's letter as evidence. Of this, however, Louise never heard. Mr. Morris destroyed both Terry's letter and hers, ignoring the incident utterly. And Terry, awakening upon the following morning in a fit of tearful repentance, hurried to Morris to apologize—only to be met by that gentleman with a politely puzzled mien and protestations of utter ignorance concerning any letters from Terry. Terry doesn't know to this day whether he really mailed the letter—and what did become of it.

Peter did not congratulate Louise or Morris. He would not. He believed in the sincerity of Terry's love—and he saw in Louise everything that was fickle and faithless in women. But as Terry's grief grew less, Peter began to see things from a less partial point of view—and he eventually agreed to be an usher with some interest in the big event. They were to be married in a month. Mrs. Perry dictated the wedding date—and Louise and Morris agreed. Iris was to come on for the wedding in order to be maid of honor, and when Cynthia Perry saw her, and observed the instant friendship struck up between her and Peter, Cynthia began to lay new plans—plans to concern the second of Virginia's daughters.

Meanwhile, however, the trousseau advanced through the various stages of completion—and Louise was rushed to distraction with pre-nuptial festivities—and she saw nothing of Terry. But she thought of him. The peace that Morris brought her—the safety she felt in giving her future into his capable hands—the security of his heart and name and wealth—these things, it seemed to her, were as nothing to the one moment of divine madness she had known in Terry's arms. As the period of her freedom grew smaller and smaller, a secret terror was born in her. Suppose she should come face to face with him afterward—after she was Morris's wife—and suppose the madness still

burned through her? Dared she go on with it—risking that?

At night, the light was no sooner extinguished than the fear came rushing down upon her. If she had no passionate, all-conquering love for Morris, would his name hold her—and fear of the world's criticism—fear of notoriety—fear of poverty and disgrace? Would these things hold her—or would she join the army of flighty, unfaithful, discontented wives?

Out of her uncertainty a great resolve was born. She would go to him. She would meet him face to face, and if this impossible love was still in her heart—if it survived—she would throw in her lot with his, would follow him, would share with him crusts or cake—what did it matter?

Accordingly, three days before her wedding, Louise found herself again before Terry's door. She reached for the knocker with trembling fingers, and struck it down twice. Beyond the door was the sound of voices raised in discussion—which instantly ceased as footsteps crossed the studio floor and the door swung open.

Terry stood before her in his shirt sleeves, his collar open, his tie awry, his hair tousled. In one hand he held a pair of riding boots; under his arm were the trousers and coat. Behind him the studio was dismantled, and an open trunk occupied the center of the floor. Before this trunk knelt a girl—a slim little girl of twenty-odd, brown-haired and brown-eyed, with the wild color of a gipsy glowing beneath her dark skin. Louise's eyes—flashing from Terry to the girl—rested there in swift recognition. She had posed for Terry's picture of "Ruth and Naomi."

"Louise!" whispered Terry—below his breath—with a little gasp. And he stood motionless, white and agonized.

Louise said not a word, but with a little shuddering sigh she turned and ran down the steep steps to where her motor waited. But she heard the little girl by the trunk call out: "How funny! What did she want, Terry?"

And Terry answered gravely: "I—guess she made a—mistake."



# THE YOUTH MORALIZES

By Louis Untermeyer

YES, it is here; this is the street,  
And this the little house of hers.  
Again my pulses throb and beat,  
The sharp and curious longing stirs.  
Once more the ancient fevers burn,  
And rack me with forgotten pain . . .  
What chance, I wonder, made me turn  
My footsteps to her door again?

Nothing is changed—the hedge, the broom,  
The quaint old flowers, the quaint old smell—  
And these, the windows of her room,  
The little room we knew so well.  
How many times we opened wide  
That darkened lattice to the moon,  
And leaned together, side by side,  
And drew in all the generous June!

How still, on tiptoe, we would steal  
Breathlessly to that scented room,  
Where gloriously she would reveal  
Herself in starlight, half in gloom . . .  
Or fall asleep and hear the rain  
Beat lightly, like an eager throng  
Of faeries tapping on the pane,  
To haunt us with a silver song . . .

And then—our love became a task,  
The rosy glamor turned to gray;  
Faith was an ineffectual mask,  
And Life a bitter holiday.  
It was the end—the acrid morn;  
Love had beheld a loveless mate—  
I laughed and looked at her with scorn;  
She smiled at me with eyes of hate.

For we had only played at love,  
Untouched by passions, free of fears—  
We never knew that pain could move  
Kindly beneath a weight of tears.  
Sweetness, not grief, came to destroy,  
And only at the end we knew  
That, in the very hour of joy,  
Love must have tears and suffering, too.



## THE SMART SET

Aye, this was taught us long ago—  
 Yet, as I watch the moonlight play  
 Along the eaves, it seems as though  
 I had been here but yesterday.  
 Nothing is changed; the old lamps burn  
 Where once we sat and watched the rain . . .  
*What chance, I wonder, made me turn  
 My footsteps to her door again?*



## WASTE

By Amelia Josephine Burr

**I** WONDERED why God let our pathways cross,  
 When I could only feel a sense of loss  
 Shroud me like shadow as she passed me by;  
 When I must hush the quick and blinding stir  
 That shook my soul at the mere name of her—  
 The nights I lay in anguish, wondering why!

Yet I was glad to serve her in small ways,  
 To hear her voice sometimes, to dare to raise  
 My look to hers in humble reverence—yes,  
 I was content—well-nigh—to thus await  
 Her kindness, a poor beggar at her gate,  
 Clad in the rags of my own hopelessness.

Then, all at once, as if a cloud were rent—  
 Without a word, I turned. Reeling, I went,  
 As one who sees a vision and then dies.  
 But I—I live; and always in my sight,  
 Dusking the day and glimmering through the night,  
 Her bravely lying lips—her tortured eyes!



**B**IGAMY is a heroic compliment to woman.



**A** GENIUS is only an adult who keeps the heart of a child and gets away with it.



# OF FIRE AND MISTY DREAMS

By Christabel Lowndes Yates

IT was late on a raw, cold winter morning as the crowd of men came out of the charity shelter into the dreary back street. In the mass they differed little, those men; they were all stamped with the common stamp of the down-trodden. The obvious dirt of them, their poverty, disease and hopelessness, were only the outward signs of the broken, diseased souls within. The prison stamp was on some, the unmistakable bondage of drink on others. They all were, or nearly all, of that pitiful, hopeless class known as the Submerged.

As they came out of the narrow, shabby door into the street, they spread out and became individuals. One, Kenneth Wishbane, was noticeable among the others, because he had about him still something of the air of an educated man. The cut of his clothes was different, and there was something in his walk that was neither the shuffle of the outcast nor the heavy gait of a man bred to labor. He was clean, too, another thing that set him apart, but the very cleanliness showed up his pallid, unhealthy skin, his weak, shifting eyes and his narrow, receding chin.

He walked along thinking aimlessly. He was going over again his interview with the head of the shelter, just before he left. He was a wonderful man, that priest, a man of tremendous personality who was possessed of one gift: an almost divine power of making men and souls out of what seemed little more than worthless clay.

The men as they left had filed past this man slowly, and he had spoken to some. The drink-sodden and the hopelessly degenerate he left; those with a

spark of manhood he attacked. The man was a very sleuthhound for souls, and he fastened on Kenneth Wishbane eagerly. There was something in this man, he knew, if only he could get at it.

"I think I can help you," he said. "Do you want work?"

Wishbane shifted his eyes uneasily. He was trying to bring his mind into line with the question, but the crowd around him, the thick, stuffy atmosphere and the keen, piercing eyes of the questioner muddled him. The shiftless, hand-to-mouth life he had led for years had atrophied that part of his brain.

"What is your work?" the priest asked. "What do you do?"

The man drew himself up proudly. His mind had come into line now. He could answer that.

"I am a poet," he said; and as he spoke he thrust his hand into his sagging pocket and clutched a little roll of something there.

"Ah, poems!" The priest held out his hand. "May I see them?"

"No, no!" The poet shrank away. "They're queer, cloudy dream stuff. You wouldn't understand them."

Though he could not express it, what he meant to say was that the priest, as a man of action, would appreciate practical, tangible things, and that his exquisite, finished little poems, woven of fire and misty dreams, could make no appeal to such a one.

His meager, starved little body shrank beneath the priest's keen gaze. Those eyes hurt him, roused him, made him think. He wanted to get away from them back to his dreams. He edged away, still clasping that little roll in his pocket, defensively. His broken, shape-



less boots made no sound on the rough floor. The other outcasts closed round, but the priest's arm thrust through them and touched him. There was a piece of paper in the outstretched hand.

"If ever you want work or help—*work, mind*—" the priest said, "bring this to me and I'll see that you get it."

He had taken the paper automatically, and gone out with the other men. He had fled from the idea of work then as always, because he knew it would kill his dreams. If he could haunt the riverside and the crowded streets, he minded nothing else; to watch the still dawn coming up over London, or to feel the surging, teeming life of the great city, that was all he asked; but now, out in the streets, the old memories of cold and hunger began their tale. He had eaten a few minutes before he left a huge meal of soup and coarse bread, but there was a long day in front of him, and no food, no money, no shelter.

He swerved back to wondering why he had not taken the proffered work. He began to think about going back, but the crowd of men coming out blocked the way, and he did not wait. The great gloomy building looked inexpressibly dreary. Almost unconsciously he wandered away from it, and down toward the busy westward streets, the aimless shambling of the homeless with another empty day ahead.

In the parks the crocuses were flaming in the beds. Overhead the sky was of that still, cold blue that it is when an east wind is blowing. Every now and then bitter little showers stung him with icy needles of rain. He drifted along shivering and dreaming, in his mind a half-formed poem which he would write later. It was about women. They were all about him in the streets as he dreamed, wrapped in furs and dainty warm garments, drawing them aside as they passed him, not seeing his staring, dreaming eyes, never guessing the intimate fancies that the scarecrow beggar was weaving about them.

For the time being, poverty, hunger and destitution were gone; he fingered the little roll of dirty paper in his pocket and dreamed again those old dreams

that made him feel the equal of kings. How wonderful they were, those exquisite, finished little poems! As he thought of them, he dreamed of all the tremendous things he could do if only he had a new start. He felt the huge living force surging within him, and knew that, given the tiniest chance, he could carve out a big career for himself. Before he had always muddled away his chances, but now it was different. . . .

The rain stopped; a gleam of sun came out and lit the pavement at his feet. Something glittering in the mud caught his eye, and with the instinctive swoop of the gutter dweller on the treasure of the streets, he darted forward and picked it up. It lay shining in his hand, a little muddy but round and shining and real—a shilling. He looked round furtively, but no one seemed to be looking at him, and with a sly movement of intense secrecy, he slipped it into his pocket.

It meant simply food and shelter to him first, of course: a meal, warmth, perhaps a bed. He strolled on; he was not hungry yet; he could wait. He played with himself, tempter fashion, to get the full pleasure out of the thought of the food. Some day, he thought, he would write a little poem about food, and what it meant to men physically and mentally, a savage, sensual poem, full of passion and animal hunger for life. It was a tremendous idea, and as he played with it, it seemed to take shape and become alive and real. Half-formed thunderous phrases slipped through his brain, and he almost forgot that not a line of it was written. He went on dreaming of the day when fame should come to him. He pictured himself famous.

A crowd stopped his way. People were arriving on foot and in motors and taxis, flocking to the doors of a huge building. It was a concert hall. Child of the moment as he was, he longed with sudden fierce passion to go in. Music had meant so much to him in the old days; it had meant the beginning of his dreams, the stealing bondage that had crept on till they gradually enslaved



him. A boy passing whistled an air, and it brought back his memories streaming. His hand in his pocket clutched the shilling; it was to him no longer so much food and warmth, but simply the passport to his old ecstatic visions. All thought of everything but the moment was gone. He went in.

Inside it was warm. In the shadow where he sat it was nearly dark, and in the comfort and the luxury of it the present slipped away and he was back in the past, a happy past where all the memories were pleasant, and where the wasted chances one after the other were only so many slips to be redeemed, now that the real incentive to work had arisen.

The orchestra began, and he thought of his poems. Weren't they worth fighting for? The possession of them made life a huge gift. As the dream grew, the remembrance of his rags fell away and he saw life as though it lay before him in a huge shapeless mass, waiting for his genius to mould it into something permanent and beautiful, as he had wrought and finished the raw stuff of his dreams into the exquisite little poems in his pocket. The rest of his life might have been empty and futile; those poems had shown of what things he was capable.

The music flowed on, rippling up to a magnificent crescendo. He felt the tremendous force behind that music, and the slow triumphal march on huge titanic things, and he knew that in spite of everything there lay within him a twin force—a power to do great things also, that he had never developed. The wasted years were not forgotten; they became a stepping stone. He fingered the priest's card in his pocket, and he recalled his words: "If ever you want work or help—*work*, mind—bring this to me, and I'll see that you get it." He would go immediately the concert was over and ask for his chance. He would take the work and do it well, whatever it was, as well as ever he could. He would show them what work meant. He braced his flaccid muscles eagerly, and decided to go at once. He would not even wait till the

end of the concert. He half rose in his seat, but the orchestra stopped playing, and the thread of his inspiration was snapped. He sat down again and waited.

At the end of the concert he rose with the others and made his way out. It was dark, and he had a long way to go. He walked slowly, big with his resolve. Now that he had left the concert hall, he was beginning to feel both cold and hungry. The little respite was over. A bitter wind, damp-laden, swept up the streets, and his wretched clothes were no protection against it. He tramped on steadily, his mind on the future. Food, work, shelter—no, more than that—new life, lay ahead of him. The wind dropped suddenly and rain fell; bitter, soaking rain that drenched him, body and spirit. He slunk on, shivering and coughing. The sheer misery of it overcame him, the tragedy of his pigmy, ineffectual struggle against the huge thing called life.

He came to the bridge over the river, and like a priest who cannot pass the shrine of his sacred things, he waited, and stared. Though it was night, he knew it all so well that the darkness did not matter. Far away below the black water made no sound as it slipped away to the sea. Lights flickered and winked on it, and the great curve of the banks, starred thick with golden lamps, made dots and streaks and snakelike reflections in the water. Behind him the huge roar of the traffic and the myriad voices of the city, in front of him the black and gold of the river, silent and changeless and forever changing. He was close to the Shelter now, where they would give him work. He realized that the old free time of dreams was nearly done, and a tremendous yearning sadness came over him.

He fumbled in his pocket for the little roll of dirty paper that held his all—the finished poems. Leaning over the balustrade, he tried to recall them, but in the face of the immensity of the night world the lines eluded him. His education was slipping from him; the streets had stripped him of that, too. He told himself that it was all finished



with now and the new life was going to begin. He thought of the priest and of the iron drudgery that lay ahead of him, and his spirit quailed.

To rid himself of the thought of it, he tried to recapture the lines of one of the lovely finished little poems, but his mind was a blank. He could remember nothing—not a phrase, not a line. It was so long since he had read them. There was a street lamp near him, and standing under it, he pulled the shabby little roll of paper from his pocket. As he did so, he glanced round furtively for a policeman, but there was an accident in the traffic and no one saw him loitering.

He undid the papers and straightened them with tender, careful fingers. They were all he had, those poems; his dreams and his moral slackness had robbed him of everything else. These alone remained: the proof that he was not as other men; and with them to work from, he could begin again.

He shivered in the wind and peered closer, then closer still, with a sudden contraction of the heart. The poems—where were they? The lovely, finished, exquisite little things. He brushed his hands across his eyes with a sudden fierce movement of pain, unendurable pain, and stared again. Only broken phrases, scarcely legible—a word here, an unfinished sentence there—in the mass nothing.

He turned page after page in a hurried, desperate search. The gentleness was all gone now, the tenderness with sacred things. He tore at the paper fiercely, as an animal might tear at the hunter's wreckage for some trace of her young. Nothing—nothing! On the last page of all a few lines were written, a poem more or less complete. He fastened on it in an agony. As he read the lines, the bitter chill grew. It was a poem but it was nothing; cheap and tawdry, no delicate stuff of dreams but the commonest bathos of the streets. He mouthed the feeble stuff with a consuming bitterness. Was this material to regenerate a man? Was it for this that he had starved and suffered and sold his birthright? With a passionate movement of unutterable shame, he crushed the papers into a shapeless mass in his hand. In the bitterness of that tremendous moment he saw himself as he was, a wastrel and a degenerate, one of the hopelessly submerged.

A uniform in the crowd near him caught his eye. It was one of the officers of the Shelter, where they had promised him a new start. He recognized it and laughed aloud, the bitter, haunted laughter of a broken man. It wasn't worth while now. He ran to the bridge, climbed the parapet with a tremendous effort and flung himself over. There was no fight in the man. He sank like a stone.



HE—So you think you understand me, eh?

SHE—Yes, perfectly; even to the fourth dimension.

"The fourth dimension! How's that?"

"Well, I measured the height of your aspiration, the breadth of your mind, the depth of your soul—"

"But you're stuck at the fourth dimension!"

"Ah, no, indeed; I saw through you all right."



MRS. BENHAM—You were a picture when you reeled home last night!

BENHAM—Yes, my dear, I was a moving picture in several reels.



# A MASTER OF MEN

By Edwin Balmer

THE clatter of the motorboat exhaust, echoing with midnight loudness over the calm and silent lake, increased so that it stirred Benjamin Hull from his sleep. The noise now told him that the boat had passed every other cottage and was coming on to his pier. So he sat up in bed and looked out.

The full moon was shining down the length of the little inland water; and in the midst of the moon shimmer on the smooth surface, a launch was speeding with dark bow high. Its waves split the shimmer almost evenly, and they rippled to both sides in rising crests which caught the light anew and gleamed like silver streamers at the stern.

The craft was steering directly toward Benjamin Hull's landing below his clipped and level lawn. The big country homes on both sides were dark; no lights showed upon their piers; no one could be expected at either of the other homes that night. Benjamin Hull burned no light upon his own pier; no one was expected at his house upon that particular night; but always and at any time, one might come.

Benjamin Hull rose and went to the window. That one was coming now. The motorboat swept up to the pier; a tall, lightly moving figure with good shoulders—a young man in summer flannels and straw hat—stood up in the launch and sprang easily upon the landing as the boat passed it. He laughed and called something after the boatman. Benjamin Hull could not hear the words, but they brought the pleased response which his son so easily won.

A sound at the bay window just

beyond him made Benjamin Hull turn. His wife was standing there; he knew that she must have left her bed long before and been standing at the other window before he roused. She was in nightgown only and with feet bare; but now she took her kimono and slippers.

"It's Lawrence. He's come home," she explained.

"Yes," he said. "When did you know he was coming?"

"When I heard the train stopping for the lake—half an hour ago. It woke me up. I thought it might be for him."

Benjamin Hull turned back to his window. The railroad was eight miles away at the other end of the lake; on still nights the whistle of a train might just be heard by one very intent.

The boy was crossing the lawn, singing softly to himself. His voice, clear and true, came up to his father. Benjamin Hull felt his face suffused, his arms ache to stretch out to his son, his throat quiver to call with joy. He checked himself with stern restraint. His wife's fingers appealed on his arm.

"Did you see him come?" she asked. "Wasn't it beautiful? All the way—almost—I could see him. When it became so beautiful, I knew it must be he!"

Benjamin Hull shook her away. She slipped off and out of the room as though he might prevent her. He heard the front door open downstairs and then the voices of his wife and his son.

It is the father who, in the parable, saw the son still a great way off and ran to meet him. The boy's mother is not mentioned at all. But the parable tells only of the first return of the prodigal and of his first welcome. Had it con-



tinued through the subsequent homecomings of the son with the new robe each time besmirched and with the ring, ten times anew put upon his finger, again in pawn, the parable must have told of the mother. It is the woman who—regardless of the succession of times the boy has disgraced himself and his—forgives and renews faith.

Not that the father's love is less. No, Benjamin Hull, standing there and trembling in his struggle to check his passion for his son as he heard his boy's voice, knew that that could not be so. It was that love had been demanding of the man something greater than forgiveness, something even harder than again repaired faith.

He stood in his room, strained and tense until—he did not know after how many moments, only the motorboat which had brought his son had passed far out of hearing—his wife came back.

"Father, Larry wants to see you."

"What has he done this time?"

"I don't know—he wouldn't tell me. He wanted to see you. . . . I don't know."

Benjamin Hull put on his dressing gown, tying it carefully about him to conceal, as much as possible, the awkwardness of his short figure; he turned on the light and brushed his sparse hair. He was conscious that his feet were red and must show above his slippers; he must appear to his son even more clearly than usual as one of a lower caste. But as far back as he could think of Lawrence forming an opinion of him, he had felt awkward before his son. Somehow, by some gift of God which Benjamin Hull after thirty years did not understand, he had won his wife from among the fortunate whose features were fair and limbs lithe and rightly rounded, whose hands were slender and never in the way; and his son had come of that same caste. Consequently the son always had had an advantage over his father in their encounters—an advantage which no lapse in his conduct could entirely take away from him.

Benjamin Hull felt this, and was conscious that his red feet first must come in sight of his son as he descended.

The electric lights were burning in the lower hall and his son was standing just within the front door.

"So they haven't been calling you up?" Lawrence estimated his father as he came down.

"Who?" Benjamin Hull asked shortly.

"The newspapers."

"If they tried to call me after eight o'clock," Benjamin Hull said quietly, "I could not have got the call. I had the wire put out of service then on account of the calls from the city. We are having trouble in town with our men; perhaps you know."

Lawrence colored slightly. "Yes, I know. That's why I came out tonight." He put his hand in the side pocket of his coat and held it there irresolutely; then he drew out a folded paper—a first page of a newspaper upon which appeared his name and his father's printed in the prominent headlines of scandal.

"I came out because I thought they must have talked to you about this over the telephone; but I guess anyway you might as well have it now."

Benjamin Hull put out his hand and took the page silently. It had been torn from an edition printed barely two hours before—the edition to be delivered later in the morning and sold on the city streets at midnight. And the story it told made it certain indeed that every newspaper in the city had been trying to communicate with Benjamin Hull that Sunday evening. It was more than the story of his son's wanton waste and conspicuous profligacy; it told the arrogance and pitilessness of that waste at a moment when to pay for it—as the newspaper saw it—Benjamin Hull was holding men and women and their children in want, sick and starved. The tragedies of the struggle of his men against their master had been more than enough to hold the first columns of the first page for the weeks before this; now the wantonness and disgrace of the master's son was blazoned in type and cartoon beside the struggles of the men. The columns carried over upon the second page; but Benjamin Hull merely glanced down them. Only in detail and



depth of debt and dishonor could they bring him news.

"Well," he controlled himself, "you did not come to bring me this; you thought they had told me this before you started. What have you come to me for? What have you come to me for?" he demanded. "To give me the same broken promises again? For the same fraud's repentance? For the same lying contrition?"

He crumpled the paper in his hand and held it, fist clenched in his passion; but his son, though quite white, faced him calmly.

"No; I think I saw last time that was done with," Lawrence said, as though the indictment of his perception were more serious than that of his character. "I wanted to see you to say that I didn't realize how I might hurt you with the trouble now going on. I didn't think about the strike and the way people are getting after you. I came to say that, I'm sorry this came out now. That's all."

He looked about him, still quite white; and, wetting his lips and taking up his straw hat, he opened the front door and went out.

His father watched him as he hesitated with head bared in the moonlight on the porch; then Benjamin Hull shivered with his struggle and turned and went upstairs. His wife, waiting above, flew past him. He heard her go out and call after their son; but whether she succeeded in bringing him in again, he did not then know.

He lay on his bed with the crumpled newspaper still in his hand, not trying to read it, yet oblivious to everything else. He had stormed at his son for what the paper told; yet the greater fault which it advertised was his own. The public clamor arose less from the fact of Lawrence's profligacy than from the knowledge that Benjamin Hull paid for it. Always he had paid; and now he knew he was going to pay again. The alternative involved trial in court, with prison, perhaps—other ugly outcomes which he could not contemplate.

It no longer was a private matter between himself and Lawrence whether he

paid and how much and for what; the strike had made it a public concern. People now were denying his right to use his own money for his son; this paper proclaimed that if he refused more wages to his men operating his street cars and power plants, the money was the men's—not his—which Lawrence Hull wasted. He sat up in bed, a new, strange burning of blood in his veins. This attack was upon him more than upon his son; this attack for the first time threw them together into common cause. Lawrence had sensed that; he had come out that night to express his feeling of it, not to make the old promise of repentance. Benjamin Hull lay building upon this long after his wife stole back into their room. Perhaps this would bring Lawrence to him at last!

Dawn came, and cautiously Benjamin Hull rose and crossed the hall to the room which had been Lawrence's since he was a little boy, and saw that his son was asleep there. The room was to the east and the windows were wide open. Outside the lances of early sunlight broke through the trees; and the light danced in the boy's room as the leaves moved. The fresh dawn breeze blew in from over the dew-sparkling fields and the grass.

There had been no change about this country home, as about the house in the city, to mark the passing years. It was very like the sunlight and the morning breezes and the dewy fields when Benjamin used to cross the hall into that room to look at his little boy years before; and now the boy's hair was back from his forehead and a little damp and his cheeks flushed and his lips relaxed and ruddy; and Benjamin Hull, before he could check himself, stooped and kissed his son on the forehead.

The early train, as it was Monday, was a special for the men returning from their weekend at cool summer places for another six days' work in the city. An hour and a half by that fast train and the green fields and farms and hills, the woodlands and the little inland lakes gave way to elm-planted, street-sprinkled suburbs, and these to the



scorching, dust-hazed rows of peeling, paint-blistered cottages upon a flat, treeless prairie. Still the train plunged on, its smoke and dust no longer dissipating and disappearing in clean, absorbent air but rising stagnant, into an atmosphere smoke-saturated and grimy, harsh and choking in the throat. Factory chimneys poured out their blasts. The train ran upon an embankment even with the second floor windows of tall tenements where mattresses strewed the platforms of rusty fire escapes and within which appeared the figures of half-naked women and children dazed by the heat. Then the station suddenly was reached, and Jennings—Benjamin Hull's secretary—met him with an automobile and drove him swiftly through streets where his street cars, heavily guarded, operated clumsily, stubbornly through the strike.

Mr. Hull gained the tall building on the city front facing Lake Michigan where he set himself to work in his office high up where wide windows let through what breeze blew from the water. Before him spread the hour's reports of the strike, telegrams, strips of clippings of the most urgent items from all the morning newspapers. These told and retold, what he had known, that violence and murder had broken out anew as his striking men were made sure of greater wrong at his hands as they read the news of his son. Men and women, starved and beaten into submission before, again battled desperately and set themselves still to endure. He had conquered them on their claims that they earned a greater part of his profits; they rose again to assert that, whether they earned more or not, now it was proved that the money better should go to them than to Benjamin Hull's son. Even those of the public who had been patient before and willing to support Hull grew hostile. So his enemies screamed with new hate and triumph.

One little item only of all that morning brought him satisfaction. He had bought a new mechanism of air pumps, motor-driven, designed to force air into the lungs of linemen electrocuted and to restore life by sustaining artificial

breathing until natural breath returned. This had succeeded in a test upon a man accidentally killed on the wires. Benjamin Hull had instructed that the machine, which was the only one in the city, be kept on call on Sunday to go to the bathing beaches where people might be drowned. He read that his machine had been called and arrived in time to bring four drowned back to life.

But as he read this the telephone brought him fresh reports of wilder violence, wrecked property, lives in danger. He summoned into his office the reporters whom he had refused to see.

"Say for me," he commanded as they ranged before him, "that nothing has changed and nothing can change the point of right between me and my men. There is nothing better back of their demands upon me than that I have made my property profitable. They are not asking for more wages; I have been paying all that they have earned. They are demanding the right of benefit from my property; they are demanding more than they earn. I shall pay each man who comes back to work his wage—every cent he earns; but no one or not all together can make me share my property with them. What is mine—however much it is—I shall use as I wish."

He lunched at his office. At night, protected by the police, he went to a hotel. The terrible heat of the day kept up. He telephoned to his home at the little lake; his son still was there and his wife happy. Benjamin Hull slept well.

The next day was stifling and the battles in the streets were fiercer. As the stories of Benjamin Hull's son spread, men burnt property with bolder certainty of sympathy, stoned and clubbed strike breakers in wild and outraged right. And the strike breakers—fighting always with half a heart—began to rebel against Benjamin Hull. Police, too, faltered as they were sent to risk themselves and imprison and shoot down hungry men for the sake of Lawrence Hull. On Wednesday morning, when the power cables had been cut again, crews were afraid to go out to repair them.



Hull telephoned to the chief of police to double his guards again; then he called the mayor, then the governor of the State.

"Send out the men, and tell them that I shall see that they are guarded," he instructed Jennings, and went out to lunch, defiant of all who assailed him for his son. The noon editions of the newspapers, displaying fresh findings of Lawrence Hull's disgrace, piled fresh fuels for the fires of hostility blazing about the father. But Benjamin laughed at those fires.

The more they told him of his son's weakness now, the more he gloried in his own great strength. His strength would suffice to insure for his son great power and place which one without strength could hold. So Benjamin Hull fought for his boy in the fury of the day—the terribly hot, angry midsummer noon. He had telephoned in the morning to speak to his son; his boy was out; but a call from the country had reached his switchboard when he returned from lunch. He hurried into his private room to speak from his own instrument. A man's voice was speaking; at first he thought it was Lawrence's. Then he knew it was not; it was a neighbor's. Now Benjamin Hull made out the tone.

"What?" he questioned and wet his lips. "What is it?" He struck the receiver hook with his finger, calling his switchboard operator. "A better connection! I can't hear! Quick! A better connection!" But now no longer was there doubt.

"Drowned!" Lawrence, his son, drowned! He had been swimming to save another; he had rescued and held up the other till boats came. Then Lawrence, exhausted, had gone down. Before they got him up, he was drowned! Dead!

Benjamin Hull fell forward in his chair, himself limp, almost lifeless. About him the world hummed—the big, busy world he was to conquer and subdue and hold in bondage for his son beyond his own death. The hostile world, hating him and his son and fighting against them, hummed triumphant now, exultant that the one for whom he

subdued it was down. But already Benjamin Hull was himself again and moving to fight back and, with his own strength and resources, making ready to ransom his son even from death—even from death!

The voice had told him that it had happened at five minutes after two. It was not yet half past two. They had recovered Lawrence's body. The doctors gave no hope of bringing back breath; yet they would still be working over the boy and keeping the body warm.

The details of the item in the Monday papers of the restoring of the drowned by the new motor machine rushed back to Benjamin Hull's mind. His machine had not failed to restore life to anyone whom it had reached within two hours; it had revived one who had been drowned even longer. Benjamin Hull owned that machine. He looked at the clock and figured the time as he called a number on the telephone.

"Mr. Hurley, the president of the road. Benjamin Hull wants him," he ordered as his number responded. "George, my son is drowned up at my place. Half an hour ago. I'm taking the pulmotor to him—you know that thing—I want a special and the line cleared at once from the yards to the lake. How fast can you make it?"

"Fifty minutes!" He corrected the time he had allowed in his mind. It was minutes better than he had counted upon; he had margin, then. He pressed buttons; assistants flew to him. "'Phone to my home. . . . See that the fastest boat on the lake is at the railroad landing. . . . Telephone down to Andrew that the train will be ready when we reach the station. I'll ride with him with the pulmotor."

He had gathered his forces to fight; he could feel, as he stepped from the office, the swift moving of many to his command—his own men making ready, the division of railroad choked with passenger trains and freight all being cleared and held still to let him pass. He still felt the awful opponent—death; but the thrill of action, the control of powerful forces came carrying the certainty of conquering. The machine he



owned—his machine tested on Monday—had not failed when it had come within two hours. He would bring it within two hours and win back his son from death!

The blood coursed through him and tingled at the roots of his sparse hair. An elevator rose before one descended. Jennings stepped from the car from below; his face was solemn.

"You've heard, sir?"

"I've everything ready," Benjamin Hull replied. "A special train is ordered; they'll clear the track to the lake. I'm taking the pulmotor, of course. I can get it there in time." Then he saw that Jennings was not comprehending. He pulled the man into the car which stopped; it was empty except for the control boy. "What is it, Jennings?"

"The linemen we sent out this morning, sir. They were guarded; I saw that they had the police as you said. But someone turned the current into dead wires they were working on. It electruted three of them—killed them."

"Three? When? What's that? When?"

"About two o'clock or a little after. The police bungled. They didn't think of the pulmotor. Of course it's new; it's the only one—"

"Go on! Go on!" commanded Benjamin Hull.

"They got a doctor before they called us. There was some trouble. The doctor got there a few minutes ago. He called us right away. The men are dead, but not burned—only the shock. He thinks if we get the pulmotor to them—"

"When?" Benjamin Hull demanded hoarsely. "When did you say this happened? You said about two or after. And when did word reach us?"

But he knew, as he demanded it, that the priority of the moment had nothing to do with it; that merely would make excuse for a weak man. His son or his men had the right to the chance of life which he controlled—a right which could not be changed by comparing clock hands at the instants their calls came. And he knew, as he told himself this, to whom first he must send his

machine which brought back life from death. It has been devised for his men at work on the wires; he had bought it for them; they had gone to work on the wires for him knowing he had it to protect them if the current caught them. Yet, as swiftly as Benjamin Hull's mind told him this, he denied it. The pulmotor was his property, bought by him. It was as much his as his coat, which he could take to warm his son though on his way he passed others in need.

He would have been on his way and now beyond call except for the evil chance of meeting Jennings with this news. Uglily he cursed that chance; so he knew the truth with himself.

The elevator reached the ground floor; he caught Jennings by the coat and pulled him with him. Only Jennings knew that news of the men had reached him now; the elevator boy could not have understood. Benjamin Hull could control, silence Jennings; the secretary was weak, almost cringing under his grasp. They came around to the door on the alley where the pulmotor, mounted upon a motor chassis, was ready to run out. The engine was started, the driver about to spring to his seat. Andrew called to Benjamin Hull as he saw him enter.

"Sir, it'll be all right. You should have seen us work on Sunday. We reached them all after the doctors gave 'em up—one after near three hours. And we brought them all back, sir!"

But now Benjamin Hull knew that it was not what Jennings, clutched beside him, knew; nor was it whether Jennings might tell; nor was it what others afterward might learn. It was what he—Benjamin Hull—knew; and his clutch on Jennings relaxed.

"Where are the men?" he asked the secretary. "Where are they? Tell Andrew where to go!"

He mounted to the seat beside Andrew as the motorcar sped out. He himself had repeated the directions which Jennings gave; yet now he was not conscious of their destination. The alarm bell beneath the boards at his feet clanged its call for the right of way through the



crowded streets. Before them vehicles drew to the curb, street cars stopped and cleared the crossings, people on foot scurried to both sides and turned, pointing. The streets were cleared as Benjamin Hull had pictured them in the dash across the city for Lawrence's life. The car had started as if for the station, but now it skidded about a corner and clanged away down stranger streets. It raced between poorer and smaller shops which, beyond the wholesale warehouses, fringed the taller buildings; it came to a stop at a corner where a crowd from such shops and the streets about packed, inquisitive and awed, before a dingy drugstore.

Benjamin Hull, glancing up, saw overhead the poles and the cut power wires upon which the men, now dead, had been working. The dead men, he repeated to himself as—no one knowing him—he went through the crowd with the pulmotor.

Three forms were lying on mattresses on the floor, dead—the bodies of two young men who had been strong and tall and a third man with face more lined and with gray hair over his temples. Men were moving the lifeless arms up and down, expanding the lungs; but the three men were dead. Benjamin Hull saw it; and though he had been told it before, the close sense of it caught him sharply.

Lawrence also was dead—like these—dead. The thought of the possibility of bringing back life had let him fancy at least a spark of existence apparent in his son. But these bodies showed none; his boy was dead like them. It seemed reasonless, absurd to apply to them the breathing apparatus of the motor-chugging machine which he had brought. But now the first form seemed to breathe. It was only mechanical; that was plain. The machine was pumping air into the lungs and drawing it out again. They kept this up for moments while the doctor in charge worked with his hands and Andrew cried to others not to watch but to work steadily over the other still forms. And now a change appeared; the breath was not so entirely mechanical, and the doctor flushed as

he listened at the heart. Oh, Lazarus, risen from the dead! The young man breathed; his heart beat; his blood showed under his skin! He lived! He choked; his eyes opened; his hands twitched; his head moved from side to side; his lips tried to speak!

From somewhere back in the crowd in the rear of the drugstore, someone—sobbing wildly—cried aloud a terrible denial, in disbelief, abandon; then as the crowd opened about the revived man, a scream rang out as when one has seen a vision. Whether it was from a woman or from a child, Benjamin Hull did not know. He could not see; he stepped back, staring ahead as if blind.

The moment before he had seen his son dead in the room downstairs where they would be working on him; he had seen Lawrence's body like this boy's ten minutes before—all pallor, all weight, lifeless. He saw doctors and neighbors working over Lawrence as the men here had worked—patiently, ceaselessly, but hopeless of gain from their own efforts. He saw them looking up, meeting each other's eyes and turning, silently, to the clock. They were marking the moments till he could arrive with his strange machine which brought back life. Yes, it gave life! He now had seen it give back life. His wife must be counting him halfway home now; a few more minutes and he must bring to them his wonderful mechanism which gave life again.

Strangely he pictured himself, as they must be picturing him, on his special train racing up the cleared rails, with whistle screaming for the towns and crossings and warning everyone to give him way as he flew on his errand to give his son life. Then dully Benjamin Hull came to himself; his watch was in his hand and showed five minutes after three. Lawrence had been drowned an hour. The sound of the pumping of the pulmotor was continued in his ears; they were using it upon the next form.

Jennings had come up; Benjamin Hull recognized him as he spoke. The secretary understood everything now. He was telling that he had telephoned to



the lake, and to the railroad offices of the delay in starting.

"Yes," Benjamin Hull said, "That was right."

Now he stood back in the crowd, motionless, waiting with the others. Those in front whispered to him, as to others, how it was going with the second man; but Benjamin Hull did not know which one he was. Only after they had given him life also, Benjamin Hull looked at his watch—the drugstore clock was two minutes fast—and saw that it was twenty-six minutes after three.

He moved forward; there was only one more. He was the man with the lined face and the gray at his temples. They had let the woman who was with him come close because—though she trembled terribly—she kept herself in control and wished only to smooth back the hair from her man's forehead. Benjamin Hull could see the gray locks between her fingers. Only once she spoke. A child was crying in fright somewhere away in the room.

"Nellie!" the woman's voice called gently, but quite clearly and steadily. "Be good, dear, for a little while more. Mother needs to be with daddy just now."

They were about to start work on the man with the pulmotor. Benjamin Hull stepped forward and spoke to the doctor. "Why did you leave him to the last?"

"Because we were afraid it might"—the doctor looked to the woman—"take longer over him," he finished.

Andrew, as he stooped, glanced his question to Benjamin Hull.

"As long as there is a fair chance for life, stay," Hull ordered.

At four o'clock the man breathed. What then was the gain of the seconds made up in the wild race of the machine for the station? What was the use of the minutes reduced as the special tore on and on? The conductor, watch in hand, told the speed; they were running half a minute, now a whole minute better than the president of the road had promised. A minute after hours had been given away! For vanity only the

motorboat roared with them the length of the lake. It was half past five when Benjamin Hull reached his house. Because the machine had been brought, the doctors tried to use it; but already Benjamin Hull's wife had locked herself in a room and could not see him because he had taken the life of his son.

The night came on, clear and cool, with the full moon rising in the starlit sky. At last the hopeless sound of the airpumps working below had been stilled and the doctors had gone home. Quietly and at peace in his own room, Lawrence Hull lay at rest. His father had opened the windows to the east and the cool night air came in; and now the moon shone down.

In his room across the hall, Benjamin Hull, still dressed, sat on the edge of his bed and rose and stepped away and returned and sat on the edge of his bed again. Slowly, as the moon climbed high and higher, the purple shadows shortened below his window. And at last his door opened and his wife—her hair down and quite disheveled—came into the room.

"Benjamin—father," she said softly. "I have been with him these last hours. The moon has been shining in his windows; one is always pale in the moonlight. He has seemed only asleep."

She stood beside her husband, clasping his hand. "There is only peace in our boy's face now, father, and innocence again and—the smile of our little son. It always has been so when he slept even up to this time. Only when he awoke did it have to go away.

"So as I sat beside him these hours, dear, I have prayed to know that it is better that his peace and innocence and his smile as he slept should never again go from him. Life has been so terribly difficult for our boy. If the Lord meant to relieve him by death, I can be content that the Lord's will was not undone."

And because he must comfort her, Benjamin Hull patted her hand clumsily and held her close. But when he had laid her on her bed and at last she fell



asleep exhausted, he went back to his window and renewed his fight with himself.

"Why couldn't I do it?" he implored of his soul. "Why couldn't I take it from them for my boy? Why couldn't I do it?"

That machine was his property as much as his power plants and car lines were his. He had called those entirely his own and denied the right of his men to share their benefit with him; he had said that his possessions were his to use as he wished. Yet when to save his son's life he needed to take that one little machine away from his men who needed it also for their lives, he had not taken it. No one had prevented him but himself; he could have taken it away from them for his son; and he had not. He had taken all his possessions and the profits from them entirely for his own, though he deprived his men of what, indirectly, meant life to them; but when the claiming of his property had been reduced to the taking away of breath from three others to bring breath to his

son, he had not been able to take his property for himself. How could that be? If he could not take his own in such need, how could he call anything his own?

The moon now was in the west and shimmering down the lane of the lake; and from far off over the still water there echoed the whistle of a train about to stop at the little lake station. Benjamin Hull's wife, hearing it in her sleep, stirred; and before she could remember, she went to her window. And soon, from out of the moon shimmer a motorboat appeared. But, before it had passed the middle of the lake, it swerved and ran awry in the moonlight. So the woman said: "It is not he; it is not beautiful as he always came."

"No," Benjamin Hull said gently. "It is not he." And he led her back to her bed. But he himself returned to his window; and while slowly the moon sank, there he stood—a strong, stubborn master of men, struggling with understanding.



## THE NOVEMBER NUMBER OF SMART SET

**P**REPARED to stimulate all such persons as are just a bit tired of the usual American periodical with its pictures of "uplifters" and actresses, with its New-England-farm sentimentality, with its analysis of the value of the Zeppelins in warfare, with its circulation-pleading serials, with its hypocritical morals and even more hypocritical smut, with its drawings of heroes ten feet tall and blue-eyed barefooted heroines lost in the Adirondacks, with its big-named little idea'd writers, with its detective stories in which the seemingly innocent person is discovered in the last line to have been the murderer of the man whose body was found by the maid in the library. In short, a magazine without any other "policy" in the world than to give its readers a moderately intelligent and awfully good time.



# LAW

By Hermann Hagedorn

LOVE, let us leave the dust and din  
Of wrangling tongues, and seek our kin,  
The stars. All day and all the night  
Men roar of wrong, men shout of right;  
Men legislate with hollow phrase  
The rapture from the budding tree,  
And statute over statute raise  
To cow the wind and fright the sea.

It is of us that endlessly  
Men wrangle, love, of you and me:  
Your feet that stray, my lips that lie,  
Your daggered hand, my covetous eye!  
Yea, we are tigers, and they quake!  
And they must curb us with their laws,  
Lest through the bars the tiger break  
And crunch creation twixt his jaws.

Their shouts bewilder. Let us go  
Where on green meadows, dim and slow,  
Dark walks with daylight, and the birds  
Confuse not holy things with words;  
Singing but what the spirits sing  
Who wander through the quiet grove,  
God's love, and ever echoing,  
God's love, and ever God's deep love.

To some high hill where closely burn  
The worlds, love, let us go and learn  
Of Law. The singing stars shall be  
Our schoolmates, and eternity  
The manual wherefrom we spell.  
Love, let us go to God to school.  
When we have learned our lessons well,  
We may not prove so hard to rule.



THE man who says continually that he has something up his sleeve hardly ever takes his coat off.



# THE STRAW

By Viola Burhans

ELLEN DARRINGTON blinked in amazement at the small, silver-rimmed clock that stood near a bowl of roses on her writing desk.

Not quite three o'clock in the afternoon and she had actually been asleep! The room was flooded with sunshine, sifted with breeze-carried odors of arbutus creviced coldly in rocks that were still thinly streaked with snow. A barelimbed syringa bush swaying outside the window made a mysterious minuet on the polished floor. As Ellen stirred, her spaniel sat up from his warm dent in a cretonne-covered chair and regarded her quiescently, his pink-rimmed eyes watery from the strong light.

In the next room Mrs. Darrington heard the nurse's pen scratching busily. Miss Keene's free moments were invariably spent in writing to her doctor in Omaha. Ellen smiled and understood, for love's ways the world over are alike. Her own love for Willis Darrington—now at the hour of its fruitage—gave her the instinct to understand and cover in her heart the other woman's virginal passion for the young doctor.

Drowsily she thought again of the wonder of life, of her satin-soft body so soon to give life; of Love, the harvester, who had planted, and who now, with her—waited. Was there, she breathed happily, anything like it? Perhaps at this hour tomorrow she would be holding her son in her arms! Her little, limp, white-dressed son, powdered from his first bath—in her eyes so lovely, so conquering!

Gradually she lapsed off into another light doze, and when she awoke this time she did not hear Miss Keene's pen. From the silence in the next room she

concluded that the nurse had stepped out for something. After a time she began to wonder vaguely what had called Miss Keene away, and finally she rose and peered into the dressing room, followed softly by her spaniel. It was deserted, and she was about to turn back, when she was arrested by the sound of voices coming to her from the hall beyond. Instinctively, and with unreasonable intentness, she listened.

Her doctor was in conversation with the nurse.

"You realize, Miss Keene," Ellen heard him say, "that everything isn't quite normal here."

The nurse made a slight sound, instantly checked, a sound of understanding—the world-wide woman spirit sympathizing with that of the world-wide woman product—and Ellen started a step forward, then stood mechanically still, unconscious that the cold nose of her spaniel was cupped into her equally cold hand.

"You think—" Miss Keene finally questioned, very low-voiced.

"Yes," Dr. Pellman answered. "She hasn't a chance in a thousand."

The listening woman whipped her hand suddenly away from the dog's cold nose.

"You never can tell," the nurse replied tritely. And when she repeated it absently, the doctor knew how deeply she felt about the matter.

"No," he assured her. "But it's unquestionably the most serious case I've had in years. I have notified Dr. Ferris—with Darrington's permission, of course."

"You have told him?"

"Who? Darrington? Great Scott,



no! He mustn't know. Next to Mrs. Darrington, he's the last one to know. He thinks that Ferris is to be here merely as an extra precaution. He'd let me take on a dozen if I said the word. Money is nothing to him. The world isn't a dime, compared with his wife."

That attitude Miss Keene understood, and a sudden, radiant flush went over her face. But immediately it passed, and again the hurt of woman, since time began, ached in her heart.

"Darrington's in a bad way himself just now," the doctor continued. "Nervous as a cat. These high-strung ones—he's an artist, you know—are the very dickens to handle at such a time. I'm afraid he'll go to pieces. If I thought he would listen to the suggestion, I'd order him away until after—"

"No, you mustn't," Miss Keene interrupted firmly. "You mustn't think of such a thing. His place is here. This sending for a man after it's all over—" She broke off abruptly.

"You don't believe in that, eh?"

"No, I do *noli*," she emphasized. And then, with latent, unsuspected cruelty in her voice, she added: "Let him know once what a woman—" Here her voice dropped so low that Ellen missed the conclusion of her sentence.

But in any case she was no longer listening. She was staring ahead of her, a tumult of protest in her eyes. So this was to be the end of it all! She had waited, hushed and happy, to do her little share of world-weaving, and now she had heard that her anticipation was only to go off into mockery. Dr. Pellman's words sounded like hammer strokes in her ears:

"She hasn't a chance in a thousand."

She felt suddenly caged, sent crushed at the start to her crucifixion. Her soul had been leaped upon unawares and thrust into a limbo of fear. Where before she had been free, her body a mystery environing its miracle, now she felt beaten very low, stripped of her wonder, outraged, naked, deceived. Slow, pitiful fight rose in her. What right had one to thrust her outside her sun?

Mechanically she made her way over

to the door, and opening it, stepped into the hall. For a moment she stood silently—an angel with a shining sword. Then she spoke quietly:

"I heard what you said, Dr. Pellman."

In alarm, the doctor hastened toward her.

"My dear Mrs. Darrington," he began, "you must not excite yourself. Especially now—"

"But I heard exactly what you said," she repeated. "You think—" For the first time her voice choked her.

He took her arm and led her gently to a seat in the dressing room.

"I am sorry you overheard me," he said simply. "But you must not put too much stress upon what I said. We doctors make a great many mistakes. The best of us often speak unadvisedly, sometimes merely to be on the safe side."

He was kind and persistent, and when finally he took his departure Ellen was spent but no longer bitter. One cannot be bitter long before the infinite capacity of nature to manage her ancient business as she will. There even surged through her a certain pride when the doctor encouragingly told her just how great was her election. When one has been chosen to walk among the close-packed stars, is it so great a matter, after all, if he should chance to be crushed?

She was alone finally. Miss Keene was told to finish her letter. Ellen sat thinking, her mind turning rapidly like a revolving light, flashing out first light and then darkness. Warning, encouragement—encouragement, warning.

If Dr. Pellman's words were true, then when the left-over arbutus withered in the crevices of the rocks she would be numbered among those innumerable, waxen, baby-skinned things now sprouting under the ground. Shut away from them for a season, in the end only to yield tenantless, transcendental dust for their grappling young roots. Her silk-soft body would become still more mysteriously soft under the caressing vampirism of the elements. She would be unfelt, unseen dust, wending to rivers, affording rootholds for flowers, housing the burrowing minions of the ground.



She pushed her chair near the open window. During the last half-hour it seemed to her that she had dreamed something gripping, but unreal. A south wind was blowing, driving the shattered hosts of winter to the northland and already bringing the spring. Cottony clouds raced by, the brooks sang in the sun, and all the ice-locked places—storm-racked meadows with their broad acres of juicy ploughland—seemed to leap with the joy outside and the pulse of nurtured life within. Ellen stretched out her arms. She was sure that the reviving earth spoke to her, although what sweet thing it said she did not know.

Where was there room for the thought of leaving amid such preparations for staying? Never before had everything around her seemed so intent on living. The grass pushed up ceaselessly through the frozen ground, the sap in the maples brazenly sucked the sun, and on every hand enfolded buds strained to be born. The keynote of the whole universe was *birth*. Was she alone to fail to bring forth?

From the library, the odor of Willis' cigar sifted faintly to her nostrils. She heard his step click back and forth, lost at intervals in the rugs. . . . Walking at this inceptive stage, she thought! Gradually the rhythm of his step beat into her brain. There seemed melody in it, unfamiliar at first, but finally it saturated her with meaning. She felt subjugated, compelled.

She pictured him quite plainly: one lean hand pinching his cigar, the other flung nervously into his pocket; his face grim, already set for a summons, his dark eyes flashing with the dower right of expectant fatherhood. And it flashed over her that, in spite of the veneer of civilization, she was just his "woman." She must hold herself proud to go down—if it was to be so—extinguished like a rushlight, while her "man" stood callously by, steeped in his millions of years of exemption, impatient only of the futurity of her agony.

And yet, so had civilization changed this man, his strength had been for her all tenderness, and his tenderness was her strength.

She remembered the showery summer night they had dined at the beach, under an aura of hot, blazing lights, serenaded with the clash of dishes and the lightsome strains of a string band. She had then first told him of their wonder in store. She did not know why she had chosen that moment. It may have been that Willis, tasting the steady brilliancy that springs from the Chianti of sunny Sicily, and recalling the sacred vicinage of the Sicilian Venus, had been the inspiration; or it may have been owing to the spell of the light-hearted band, with its lover-like measures. Whatever the reason, they had gone from that room of revelry with revelry far removed from their hearts, feeling that henceforth they were of the elect, chosen to cover in one step together the distance to the heights.

The months following had fed their anticipation. Willis' illustrations took second place. "Afterward," he would say indefinitely, and Ellen, scalloping blankets and buttonholing sacques, would smile. Once he had asked her why she always used *blue* ribbons for the trimmings, and her reply had humbled and amazed him beyond words. He could understand that she might wish a son. He had heard that all women did. But that she should want the boy to be exactly like himself—to him that seemed a kind of unnecessary prodigality.

The walking in the library finally ceased, and Darrington came up the stairs and into her room. As Ellen rose to meet him, he took her gently in his arms. He could not see that she turned her face from him and stared at the wall. She was glad that he did not know. With an effort she commanded her voice:

"Will"—she spoke with a kind of flat gaiety—"I finished the cap this afternoon. . . . How did your drawing turn out?"

"Not so well. Tomorrow—"

The pathetic fallacy of their bravery gave way.

"You must not," she whispered after a time. "I need your strength. I'm counting on it."

He stared at her dully.

"You will do better—without me," he



jerked out finally. "I can't stand—seeing you—"

"Don't say that!" she breathed sharply. "I need you—to force me to be strong."

He looked at her strangely.

"Don't you understand?" she continued, her tone purposely sharp. "I can't make out alone. If you leave me—"

The words would have stung him to reply, but suddenly she trembled in his arms; then with wan radiance she smiled directly in his eyes, and in a lightning flash he knew.

"It is all right," he reassured her. "I understand. I'll not leave you." And supporting her from that moment, they faced their hour together.

Pale streaks in the east, harbingers of dawn, tried to effect an entrance into the electric-lighted rooms. The encroaching daylight spirited away a thin moon that had hung by a thread all night. Snapping the fastenings from a window, Miss Keene threw it open, and leaning her arms on the sill, looked stonily ahead of her. On the lawns below cobweb filaments glistened and, one by one, broke under their drops of dew. Shifts of heliotrope sky reeled by, promising later a cloudless blue. Against the window giving on the porch Ellen's spaniel whined, and impatiently the nurse hissed him away.

Finally she turned within the room, and at that moment Dr. Pellman, worn-looking and disheveled, came toward Darrington, who stood immovable by the stand where the roses of yesterday were beginning to droop.

"Perhaps it would be better—" he began; but he got no further, for with a sound like a snarl the young man turned upon him. The long night had ravaged his soul. His face glowed with rebellion and with something finer—something that the physician, practised though he was in reading expressions, had not before seen on a man's face.

"You'd better go back to her," he said, making an effort for control.

Pellman looked immeasurably sorry for the younger man.

"Dr. Ferris is with her," he said kindly. "Everything is being done—that can be. She's conscious. She needs you again."

Like a soul on springs suddenly set free from a weight, Darrington shot past him. Approaching the bedside, he leaned close to his wife's ear.

"I'm right by you, Ellen—just as I said I'd be."

She did not stir.

"I'm giving you my strength," he dinned into her ebbing consciousness. "All of it, dear. Can you hear me? You *must* hear me!" he persisted, unconscious of any presence in the room other than himself and his wife. "You can't leave me. I could not be standing here if you were going away. Love has made us both deathless, eternal. Realize this, Ellen. You must—"

He lurched a little, caught himself; and at that moment she moved, as if she were automatically clutching at the straw of his strength, of his spirit running to hers. Dr. Ferris, his hand constantly on Ellen's faint pulse, nodded savagely for him to continue. Pellman and Miss Keene both stood in attitudes of listening suspense. Neither believed in miracles; nevertheless, if one should stop at their door, they were prepared to withhold judgment.

"Think, Ellen," Darrington went on, his voice distinct and magnetic, as if the shadow of fear, and of death itself, had lifted its hovering wings from his premises. "There are millions of women just like you at this moment, pulling and praying to win! You are not going to fail. Pull harder—and hold! It's all in the holding, dear. The woman I love is not a quitter. Tonight"—he seemed oblivious of the eternity she was on the point of entering—"there'll be a son in our arms. A *son!*"

He staggered, catching at the bedside for support. Again she stirred faintly, and for the second time Dr. Ferris nodded violently for him to continue.

"Have you thought of that, Ellen?" he asked. "It isn't as if you were enduring for nothing. It's for the youngster, sweet—our boy! Remember the caps you made for him—and all those party



things strung with blue ribbons? The brown kid shoes, and that lace basket with the soap and safety pins in it? And the white felt shoes you cut out for him?"

Miraculously, he felt another faint clinging to his hand.

"Is her pulse any stronger?" he queried anxiously.

"Don't question me," Ferris snarled. "Keep on talking to her."

Darrington again took up the thread. Patiently, magnetically, he went on, speaking with simple conviction, again unconscious apparently of anyone but his wife. Dr. Ferris, as he listened, had difficulty in seeing through his moist glasses. Pellman took out his handkerchief and did not immediately replace it, and Miss Keene, who stood by the stand of roses, was crying silently.

"I'm giving you my strength," Darrington continued, biting the tremble from his lower lip. "Don't you feel it lifting you up? You must be conscious of it, Ellen. It is helping you, dear. It's the only way I *can* help you. You must— Ah-h!"

It was a strange, spent cry, followed immediately by a crisp, professional direction from Dr. Ferris. Miss Keene sprang to the bedside, swabbing her cheeks dry as she came. Darrington got the penetrating odor of chloroform—one blessed smell—and then he seemed

to slip restfully down into soft, enfolding darkness.

The next thing he knew he heard Dr. Pellman's cheerful voice:

"All right now?"

"Why, of course," the young man answered, springing to his feet and trying to recollect what had happened. He had a confused sense that the world had crashed about his ears, ironically leaving him the sole survivor. But at that instant he heard a soft footfall, and Miss Keene appeared in the doorway with something white-bundled in her arms. Then in a flash he remembered.

"Your son," she said, smilingly extending the bundle in his direction.

Without a single glance at it he held Miss Keene's eyes, his own sick with fear.

"My—wife!" he managed to stammer.

"She is doing nicely. You may see her."

He sprang past, with still no glance for the blanketed child.

As he came into the room, Ellen, strangely drawn and white-faced, smiled at him radiantly.

"Your strength—saved me," she whispered faintly.

But Darrington had no words. He dropped to the side of the bed, his head denting into the counterpane. And sensing his need she quietly stroked his hair.



## TO A DISCARDED FAVORITE

By Winifred Webb

I KNOW the open throttle, the potent turn of the wheel;

I have seen today what wild birds see, and felt what wild birds feel;  
For the long road is the right road when a man has joy of his car,  
And the blithest wind is the wind across the field that calls afar.

I have stilled the throbbing engine now, and set the safety brake;  
The thing that was as sixty steeds goes dead—and a sudden ache  
Grips at a heart that remembers a life so like my own:

The look, the whinny, the nuzzled love she gave when we were alone.



# RAIN SONGS

By Charles Hanson Towne

THERE is a music in the lyric rain—  
I love its rapturously wild refrain  
That echoes down the summer-haunted lane.

O golden orchestra! Repeat your tune  
Through all the singing corridors of June,  
In the green hush of the soft afternoon,

And I will listen to the leaves' delight,  
Clapping their joy from many a wind-blown height,  
Till falls the velvet curtain of the night.

## II

I wandered through the rain  
Upon a windy road;  
The lights were far away,  
And distant my abode.

But the clean rain came down  
And kissed me on the brow;  
I said: "I am not troubled,  
I am not weary now."

For something in the rain  
Soothes us when we faint;  
It hushes our despair,  
Hushes the heart's complaint.

The merciful, good rain  
From heaven's great bowl is poured,  
Each drop a healing angel  
Descending from the Lord!



MANY a man who vows he would give his soul for a woman's love feels that he  
has been overcharged when he finds it has cost him his reputation.



# THE BEAUTIFUL FACE IN THE RUE D'ENFER

By Richard Le Gallienne

PROFESSOR of the Romance languages in a Western college, Roger Waynfleet was by temperament as well as profession something of an anachronism in his American world. As a lecturer on such un-Western subjects as Provençal, old French and early Italian, he might be said to be professionally a dweller in the past; but, apart from that official isolation, and, though he was yet on the hopeful side of forty, he dwelt, too, no little in a certain private past of his own, from which he had no desire to move on into any active future, finding in it indeed a sort of attractively elegiac seclusion—a circumstance which gave a poetic wistfulness to his occasional occupation of the present. Actually, he was a good deal sadder than this way of putting the matter sounds, and as a man who lives with a face he can never hope to see again may well be.

Now Paris is, of all places in the world, the place for such men, for the old city understands such romantic sorrows, and takes to its heart such lonely lunar folk. Its old walls, its narrow, history-haunted, fate-charged streets have beheld the wildness of so many lovers, that its very stones seem to breathe sympathy and comprehension, and indeed to promise impossible consolations.

When, therefore, three or four months before, Waynfleet had heard that she who had seemed to play at hide and seek with him through the best ten years of his life had finally, as by an elfish climax of the game, hidden herself away from him somewhere in the dark corridors of death, he had determined as soon as

possible to take an extended vacation from his professional chair and its attendant sociabilities, and lose himself for a while in the sympathetic twilight of Paris. The city had no acute personal memories for him; therefore he could the better give himself up to its wistful-wise and soothing charm.

A delightful solitary winter was just coming to an end. It had passed chiefly in those tranquil bookish excitements which for anyone with retrospective tastes the romantically learned old city supplies at every turn, explorations of out-of-the-way historic *quartiers*, browsings among the shelves and the stalls of the old *bouquinistes*, musings in shadowy old churches and the like. And now the spring, the winsome, coquettish spring of Paris, was beginning to rain and shine, to laugh and cry, with radiant glooms and sudden sallies of sunshine and gusts of glittering showers, above the high black roofs and in and out among the narrow, time-dark streets. Waynfleet had gone out on such an April morning, and walked from his rooms in the Val de Grâce down through the Luxembourg Gardens, where the chestnuts were beginning to spread out their gay green leafy hands, down through the Rue Bonaparte, with its old print and old book shops, the windows of which he knew by heart, till, crossing the Boulevard St. Germain, he had plunged into the network of ancient streets which lie between there and the Seine.

It was a walk he took almost every day, but presently he found himself in a narrow twisting street he did not re-



member having been in before. It was unusually dark and old-looking, and, after the roar of the Boulevard St. Germain, its intense quietness seemed almost forbidding. Its time-blackened walls rose to a great height, and its huddled roofs left but a narrow strip of sky. Its barred and shuttered windows wore an air of medieval grimness and suspicion, and whatever life housed there kept itself indoors. A mouldering, secretive, wicked old street it seemed, for which you could imagine sinister nocturnal activities, and where, indeed, one would not willingly wander after dark. Yet suddenly—such are the constant surprises of Paris—looking through a great gateway of crumbling stone, in which a wing of an iron-studded oak door swung ajar, Waynfleet's eyes were captured by a glimpse of dazzling green freshness that seemed almost unearthly amid its sombre surroundings. It was a little stone courtyard, lined with lilac bushes just breaking into blossom, and on the side facing him at the far end, set into the wall, was a bas-relief, looking like a fragment of an ancient frieze—an exquisitely modeled head of the Medusa, filled with a terrible loveliness. Beneath it, a thick bed of narcissus flashed white and gave out its piercing fragrance. And the morning sun fell into the little court with a curious loveliness.

As Waynfleet stood looking in through the door, caught by the spell of the green freshness, and the suggestion as of a beautiful mystery that seemed to dwell there, he was aroused by a rustle nearby, and, as he turned, the figure of a young woman slipped by him and passed up the court. At the left there was a door in the wall with a canopy richly carved with Cupids and vine leaves. Waynfleet involuntarily lingered, watching the swaying figure of the woman, about which there seemed a vague familiarity. As she reached the door, and just before she entered, she turned her head, and revealed to him a face of strange and fairylike beauty. But it was something even stranger than its beauty that sent a tremor through Waynfleet's frame. For the face that, the next moment, vanished within the

carved door was, almost feature for feature, the face of the dead girl he had loved.

The turmoil of spirit into which he was thrown by this startling vision is easy to be imagined. That nature could be capable of so torturing a coincidence had never before entered his mind. The face and form he had loved had, in his fond imagining, seemed unique in the universe, yet here was a face and a form that, had it not been for the sad certainty of his knowledge, he would have immediately recognized and approached as belonging to the woman he knew all too surely to be lying in an English grave. But, he told himself, he had had a mere glimpse. A closer scrutiny would doubtless dissipate the resemblance. Then he had read that those who had lost by death anyone much loved were very apt, so long as the first freshness of their sorrow endured, to be haunted by such chance and partial resemblances, and, in fact, he had occasionally found himself involuntarily pained by fleeting contours and attitudes of faces and figures in the streets that momentarily brought her back but on the next instant cruelly reminded him that she walked the streets no more. Yet, such is the curious superstition of grief, of that *desiderium* from which he suffered, that in such cases he had not been satisfied till, by a nearer inspection of those cruel reflections, he had assured himself that in very truth it was not she.

So with this new and more vivid hallucination, he realized that he would not be at peace till he had seen the beautiful unknown once more and made himself as sure of her unlikeness as he had been tantalized by her likeness. And that he might find the street again, he looked about, searching on the sides of the houses for its name. It was not till he had followed it to its end beneath the walls of an ancient church that at last he read in faded lettering—"Rue d'Enfer." The name was one that not unnaturally appealed to his superstitious imagination, stirring in his memory old fancies of beautiful vampires, of men that had been haunted by lovely women who refused to rest in their graves.



Gautier's "Clarimonde" was one of his favorite stories. He had picked up a copy of it on a stall a little time before, and read it again, with a wild longing that such mere poet's dreams might, once in a while, come fearfully and wonderfully true. And the very house had seemed strange, with its hushed court, that lovely and terrible Medusa head, those antique carvings over the door, and that piercing fragrance of narcissus which somehow he had always associated with death. Was it not the flowery symbol of beauty untimely dead in its young bloom?

While he dismissed such musings for what they were, the morbid imaginations of a heart bereaved, he none the less determined to see that strange face again, and to that end spent many hours of several succeeding days, patrolling that dark street and its neighborhood, though all to no purpose. However, one afternoon, when he had temporarily abandoned his watch, and, having strayed along the Quai Voltaire, was turning over the pages of an early printed folio of the poems of Catullus and Tibullus, here and there pausing over the old lovesick Latin of the latter—a lover, like himself, more acquainted with love's loss than its satisfactions—suddenly, bending over the same stall as himself, she was there. He let the book fall from him, with an exclamation. His heart seemed to stand still, and he gazed at her with wide eyes.

"Good Lord!" he repeated, but perceiving that she, too, was looking at him in a curious way, he strove to recover himself, and, raising his hat, approached her.

"Forgive me," he said, "but I feel that I owe you some explanation. You are so singularly like someone that I once knew that I was startled."

She smiled kindly on him for answer, and, as she smiled, he felt as though he must faint. Had nature created two women with that same smile? Manners were not to be thought of. He could but stare at her, deadly pale. Then she spoke. The voice, too! "It is strange, but do you know that you, too, are remarkably like a friend of mine I haven't

seen for years? I was almost sure it was he till I looked closely at you"—and, as she spoke, she looked full into his eyes, with eyes that seemed the dead woman's very own.

"But you are—you must be she," Waynfleet exclaimed wildly. "There has been some terrible mistake. You did not die, after all. Surely you are Myrtle Rome. You must be. There cannot be two women in the world so exactly alike."

"No, it is some trick of resemblance," she answered. "My name is Thalia Winter. I wish for your sake I were that other—since she seems to have meant so much to you."

"She meant all the world."

"And I am so like her?"

"Like her! The more I look at you, the more you talk, you seem to be just she herself. How can I make you understand how strange and terrible it seems?"

"I think I understand—for as I look at you I can hardly believe that you are not that friend of mine."

And so the two stood looking at each other, till at length a certain humor in the situation seemed to appeal to the woman, and with a little laugh—that same boyish humor, too—she said:

"I wonder if two people who so perfectly resemble another two are not entitled to act a little as those other two would have acted under the circumstances?"

"How would that be?" asked Waynfleet with an answering smile.

"Well, don't you think, at this time of the afternoon, they might possibly have felt like a cup of coffee and a cigarette in each other's company?"

"I am sure of it," said Waynfleet gaily, and with that he slipped his arm into hers, guiding her in the direction of a nearby café. Every moment it was growing more and more impossible to believe that this beautiful stranger could be other than the dead woman that he loved.

When he was alone that evening Waynfleet found himself in a state of unusual elation and perplexity. Thalia



Winter's resemblance to Myrtle Rome was so astonishingly complete that it had done something more than torture him. It had brought him an unexpected joy, the nature of which might well have occupied the casuists of those old courts of love, whose pastime was to analyze and adjudicate upon subtle states of lovers' feelings and nice points relating to the duty and faithfulness of plighted hearts. Were Waynfleet and that beautiful face from the Rue d'Enfer to continue seeing each other—and they had made an engagement to meet on the morrow—it seemed anything but unlikely that Waynfleet would find himself in love with the resemblance—for the sake of the lost reality.

Here was a face whose resemblance to the face he had lost was scarcely less identical than the face that looks out from a mirror is with the face that gazes into it—was it to be wondered at then that, as it presented to his eyes the same beauty, it should arouse in his heart the same emotion? Not to love the copy would seem a sort of unfaithfulness to the original; yet to love it—might that not rather be the unfaithfulness? And how sure could he be that he really was loving the dead Myrtle Rome in the living Thalia Winter? Yet sure he was that in the resemblance was the origin of the feeling that was already strong enough to challenge analysis. He had seen many other beautiful faces during his stay in Paris, but never for a moment had they swayed his heart from its allegiance. Did not that alone prove the nature of his feeling toward the beautiful face of the Rue d'Enfer?

He fell asleep at last, still pondering the delicate paradox, and to his dreams came the beautiful face. It seemed to be lying close to his on the pillow, ringed about with light, and sweet with the fragrance of down-fallen hair. Was it the face of Myrtle Rome or—Thalia Winter?

Such complex situations are apt to act themselves out first, and get themselves analyzed afterward. So Waynfleet realized, the moment his eyes rested on Thalia Winter's face on the morrow.

To escape loving her was not in his power, whatever the nature of that love might be, or however he were to reconcile it with the love to which, he told himself, it was a sort of sacramental sequel. Sacramental, was it, or sacrilegious? At all events, the ghostly fantastic resurrection did not fail to resemble the original passion in one particular—the wildness and dreamlike abandon of its progress. Never have lovers more whole-heartedly thrown all other considerations to the winds, save the all-important necessity of their loving, than did Roger Waynfleet and Thalia Winter during the days that immediately followed that meeting over the old bookstall on the Quai Voltaire. That terrible divine absorption one in the other was theirs which turns an earthly city of stone and iron and wood pavements and busy multitudes and roaring traffic into a sky-built city of the rainbow, with fairy palaces and shining streets and magic music falling from the clouds, and for sole inhabitants just two enchanted beings gazing day-long into each other's eyes. Paris ceased to exist for them, or rather existed in a radiant transfiguration of itself, as they drove through its streets, sat in its cafés, feasted in its restaurants, laughed in its theaters—the only significance of these varied activities being that they were together.

Soon the days were not long enough, and they were never apart. That quiet little court in the Rue d'Enfer saw two figures slip in and out, whereas before there had been but one, and within that door canopied with Cupids and vine leaves were, for Waynfleet, mysteries no more, saving the eternal mystery of a woman's beauty and that other mystery of her giving it to the man she loves. But both these mysteries, in his case, were intensified by that other mystery which, far from ceasing to haunt him, grew more and more of an obsession, and gave a ghostly super-significance to every circumstance of his passion. Every kiss of Thalia Winter's warm lips seemed to have its counterpart on lips forever cold!

As by a tacit understanding, the two



lovers refrained from inquiring into the histories or circumstances of each other. How Thalia Winter came thus to be alone in an out-of-the-way corner of Paris, and apparently of her own will secluded from friends or contact with any social world, Waynfleet was content to be in ignorance. In fact both were the better pleased to know each other, so to say, *in vacuo*, and to regard their meeting as a divine windfall to be accepted gratefully without question. They had dropped down out of the sky, on a certain day, in front of an old bookstall in the Quai Voltaire, and immediately loved each other. That was enough. Their antecedents were irrelevant matters, and in fact their romanticism would have resented such, much as the faithful might resent materialistic explanations of a miracle. This reticence was all the more acceptable to Waynfleet, because it left him the freer to indulge his retrospective fancy, and to make believe that Thalia Winter was Myrtle Rome, after all. But here Thalia herself was rather curiously to disturb the illusion, for, while she was indifferent to all the rest of Waynfleet's history, she seemed to find a strange pleasure in asking him questions about the dead girl whom she so remarkably resembled; and this interest, more strangely still, seemed entirely free from the jealousy one might have expected her to feel. On the contrary, it seemed animated no little by sympathy with a beautiful sad story, her own piquant relation to which only the more gratified her artistic sense.

"You must never tell me that you love me for myself," she had said once. "To begin with, I wouldn't believe you; but, besides, it would spoil the story. I should be robbed of the thrill of knowing that every time you look into my eyes or kiss my lips you are in imagination gazing into the eyes and kissing the lips of a dead woman."

Such declarations, which seemed sincere, however unnatural, very properly filled Waynfleet with a disconcerting confusion of feelings, but when he would attempt some stammering compromise between betraying the memory that was

still sacred to him and confessedly paying a living woman the strange homage of loving her for the sake of a woman that was dead, Thalia would stay his protest with: "You must not lie to me; and I like you best when I know you are thinking of her." Poising her red lips near his, she would add, "You must not be unfaithful to her," and then press them so warmly against his that he forgot to wonder whether or not the irony was accidental or intentionally diabolic.

She had, one time and another, induced him to tell her bit by bit the whole story of his love for the dead girl, encouraging him to dwell on the smallest detail of memory, and sympathetically kindling the more she saw him carried away into the past. When he would endeavor to veil the tenderness of some reminiscence into which involuntarily he had glided, she would encourage him with a pressure of the hand, bidding him have no fear of hurting her, and assuring him that she loved him best when he seemed most to be "loving 'her.'"

"And I am really like her?" she would say for the hundredth time. "Look at me carefully again. Surely you must find some difference!"

And again the wonder of it all would send an uncanny thrill through Waynfleet's whole frame, as, feature by feature, he studied that nobly moulded face, with its pure ivory skin, white as a magnolia blossom, searched desperately the mystery of those great gray-green eyes or loosened with tremulous fingers the masses of that night-black hair. There was no difference at all. That was the plain miraculous truth. Sometimes the bizarre fantasy of the situation, its element of ghastly quaintness, would be uppermost in her imagination.

"You must think me a strange girl," she would say, "and certainly most women would think yours a strange way of making love—to entertain me by the hour with the charms and the memories of a woman who is dead. You remind me of the fancy of a young poet I once knew—yes, now I think of it, it was very like you. His young wife was dead, and he fancied himself heart-



broken. By way of showing it, he made love to all the beautiful women he knew with the utmost *naïveté*, all the time talking to them about his lovely dead wife, and his tears for her would wet the cheeks of those consolatory ladies . . ."

"Now you are cruel, and rather horrid," Waynfleet interrupted. "It is not the same . . ."

"No, no, of course not; but wait a minute. I must tell you. That young poet had a story which he had made up and thought of writing. Whether he ever did so or not, I don't know. But I confess I thought it was very pretty. It was, I expect, meant as a sort of shamefaced justification of himself. It was about Dante and Beatrice. It was natural, he said, for great grief to seek such consolation, and it was well known how, after Beatrice's death, Dante had sought the society of many 'ladies that had intelligence of love.' My young poet planned to write a poem of Dante, the night after the death of Beatrice, in the loneliness of his grief, seeking out a beautiful young courtesan, and discursing to her of the loveliness of Beatrice, of his deathless love for her, and describing her beauty as she lay hushed among her flowers. It struck me as a beautiful fancy, and"—Thalia paused, and then, looking with a certain archness into Waynfleet's eyes, she added—"very natural."

On other occasions, however, Thalia's moods would be oddly different.

One afternoon, when she had induced him to confide some memory peculiarly intimate and sacred to him, she had been watching his face as he talked with an unusual intent wistfulness. When he finished, as one who comes out of a dream, she had taken his face very tenderly between her hands, looked very gently at him a long time and then kissed him softly on the eyes.

"Now you must kiss me no more today," she had said; and after that sat very silent a long time. Yet he was sure, whatever the meaning of her mood, that it was not jealousy. As the days passed, these moods grew more frequent.

"Don't let's kiss each other today,"

she would say. "I love you just the same, but don't let's, anyway."

And curiously enough, in these moods, she seemed more like Myrtle Rome than ever before, for such inexplicable fits of silence had been one of the perplexing ways of her dead counterpart, and as Waynfleet pleaded with her for an explanation—had he unconsciously wounded her? Was that it?—the past did indeed seem to be repeating itself with a ghastly *vraisemblance*. One day she had sent him this "*petit bleu*": "Don't come to me today. We shall not be happy." That was all. That was indeed like Myrtle Rome! But he had gone, for all that, which was like his past too.

From these moods she would emerge with a sudden abandon of tenderness and gusty self-reproach. She would never be cruel to him again. And from despair, he found himself plunged once more into a happiness that was unearthly in its lyric blessedness. Surely life can give no more than it gave to Roger Waynfleet and Thalia Winter in that little paradise in the Rue d'Enfer.

There had they spent together a whole spring and summer of love, scarce noticing the names of the months as they sped by, and giving no thought to a world which they seemed to have walled off from them forever by a rampart of rainbows. But autumn was beginning to fall with its whispers and shadows and all its melancholy restlessness of departure and decay, clouding even the golden face of love with fateful imaginings. September had come with its wild sobbing rains over the high roofs, and as the two lovers listened to it falling in the little court where the lilacs were already shedding their leaves, they drew close together as if for protection from some approaching sorrow. They told each other it was but the trick of the wind and the rain, and kissed and vowed, but there was something in Thalia's eyes that made her lover afraid, though it was a fear he could not, or dared not, put into words. Those moods of hers came oftener as the autumn deepened, and one of them came upon her strangely enough.



The world, as I said, was still out there beyond the rainbow ramparts, yet perhaps it was the chill touch of autumn at his heart that reminded Waynfleet that sooner or later he must return to it once more—but not unless he might take Thalia with him. He had made a vow that he would never marry; but his love for Thalia was too strong and warm a thing for so phantom a truth, and besides, in marrying her—his hallucination still held—would he be really violating it, after all?

So he had taken Thalia by the hand and asked her to be his wife; but, strange girl as she was, with the strangest of results.

"Oh, Roger!" she exclaimed. "Now you have hurt me at last. I will love you always, but your wife you have no right to ask me to be. Your soul is married to hers forever. It can never be mine. Mine can only be its shadow. Strange as it may sound—you are most mine—when you are most hers!"

Kneeling at her side, with his head on her lap, Waynfleet gave way to his anguish like a child. But it was all in vain. She remained strangely obdurate, though she gently stroked his hair, saying that she was his all the same, and that he would understand it all some day.

As he helplessly drew her to him, and pressed his head down among those sweet rustling skirts, he little knew that he was enfolding all that loved sweetness for the last time.

From heaven Thalia Winter had seemed to drop down to him that spring day. Back there she was as suddenly to be snatched. Perhaps she hardly knew it herself—as she held Waynfleet to her bosom in good-bye that September night. Yet on the morrow, as he came with his wonted eagerness up the dark street of the beautiful face, why was it that his heart sank with unreasoning misgivings, why did the little court look suddenly so strangely blank and lonely? Before he had passed through the door—that happy door of Cupids and vine leaves—he knew, as though a hammer had felled him, that his life was at an end—that Thalia had

gone. There was scarce need to open the door of her room to know that she was not there. The room, indeed, was empty as a tomb. On the table was a letter. Waynfleet threw himself on the bed in an agony of desolation.

"I cannot bear it!" he cried.

Listlessly he turned at length to the letter. What mattered her explanation? But *the handwriting!* It suddenly struck him for the first time that he had never seen her writing. Her only messages had been telegrams. He tore open the letter.

"Once more," it went, "we have missed each other. Oh, Roger, is it your fault? Or is it mine? Call it mine. Say it is my mad desire for the perfect thing. Again we came so near it. Again it has failed us. After our parting of years ago I married—did you know? But I hated myself the moment after. I ran away, and with the aid of a friend had it given out that I was dead. So I escaped from the world. That was why I was hiding in Paris, and when I suddenly found you, and realized that you believed me dead, the whim to test your love took hold of me. You know the rest. It was wrong, it was cruel. But, will you try and understand this? I have left you, because I am jealous of myself. Perhaps if you had only loved the living me, and frankly forgotten the dead, it would have been different. But, pretending faithfulness to the dead one, you were actually faithless to both of us. Now you will understand why I was not jealous of the dead woman. I was not jealous *of* her. But, oh, Roger, I was so jealous *for* her. Can such a girl ever be happy? I think not. Certainly she could never make you happy, dear Roger. So be wise and forget 'the beautiful face in the Rue d'Enfer'; or only think of her as the dead—Myrtle Rome."

Waynfleet laid the letter down upon the table in a numb and dazed way.

"Oh, Thalia!" ran his thought. "It is only women who can thus act the swift and silent executioner."

He stood a while looking down into the little court. How cruel seemed the face of the Medusa—yet how beautiful!



# ALMOST

By Sam S. Stinson

**S**OME men seem to think they know almost as much about women as the inventor of ice cream soda did.

The society woman who goes on the stage is almost as great a hit as the actress who goes into society.

The man who refuses advice is almost as sure to get into trouble as the man who takes it.

Some people impress us as being almost as old-fashioned as last year's popular songs.

The hen that has just laid an egg cackles almost as much as the woman who has just been told a secret.

The man who goes on a shopping tour with his wife is almost as uncomfortable as the woman who accompanies her husband to a ball game.

A woman suffers almost as much from a broken heart as a man does from toothache.

A girl of eighteen is almost as fond of a man who remembers her birthday as a woman of thirty-eight is of a man who doesn't.

Cuss words are almost as great a comfort to a man as a real good cry is to a woman.

Some people believe almost as thoroughly in hero worship as the hero does himself.



**E**VERY time that some people open their mouths they throw away an opportunity to appear wise.



**O**NE never knows the amount of enjoyment that some people get from being shocked if one has never known a prude.



# THE BARON'S CARRIAGE

By J. M. Morrison

THE devil was in it, thought I, as I dodged into the shrubbery to let the carriage pass. How could this be the Baron? Not ten minutes before I had seen him in tweeds and heavy boots, like one about to walk abroad—a strange thing in itself on this raw evening. He had had a great muffler about his neck that might have hidden his face, I think, if he had drawn it up, and I recollected well how he had brandished a great walking stick at me as he shouted me out of the room.

For I must own I had received treatment that no man has a right to extend to a brother-in-law a little down in the pocket. It had never been like this before. As a rule I need simply approach him with a new joke or a funny story, and when he has laughed his fill he will supply me handsomely. But tonight he had not seemed in the mood for funny stories, and I reflected that I should have known better than to try to make a joke out of that nasty rumor about his wife and the English viscount. She was my sister, of course, but still I was taking liberties.

None the less, I had been grossly insulted, and was still in a seethe over it when I heard the carriage wheels crunching up the drive. It was partly for the sake of pride, partly because I am possessed of a certain magnified circumspection my enemies call cunning, that I dodged into the shrubbery. It was most abominably damp, but there I crouched, peering out as the carriage passed. As it came opposite me a match flared within. I had a glimpse of the Baron's head and shoulders. He wore no muffler, and seemed to be in common evening clothes. I saw his profile, with

the great Wellingtonian nose, the black waxed mustache and sharp beard which did not in the least disguise the heavy jaw. The match went out almost instantly, leaving only the glow of a cigarette, but even in the moment that it vanished my alert eye had caught something strange.

Now my friends, the detectives, have discovered that no two human beings have ears precisely alike. The Baron has a round, thick, simian kind of ear, but I could have sworn that the ear I had glimpsed just as the light was puffed out was longer and differently formed. But I might be wrong—the glance I had caught was much too brief for certainty. I was still puzzling when I crept out of the wet shrubbery, but I did not fail to send a hearty curse after the carriage.

Half an hour later I was in the heart of Paris, having been compelled to resort to a cheap public conveyance, which hardly smoothed my grievances. In front of a certain club whose windows look directly out upon the street I came upon the Baron's carriage. The Baron sat within, but what he did there I was at some loss to imagine. Men whom I knew for his acquaintances passed and repassed but, although he is usually hail-fellow with his equals, I could not fail to observe that he bowed to none except such as greeted him first. And most of those, I was convinced, would have passed without noticing had not the blazoned crest on the carriage caught their eyes.

You may guess that I was still curious about the matter of that ear. In fact, I edged up as near as I dared, but he was leaning back on the cushions and only his profile was at all distinct. And



here, being close, I remarked another singular fact. The Baron has black eyebrows, very wide and bushy. Now was it due to the dimness of the light or to my excited fancy, or was it indeed a fact that those eyebrows, black—almost unnaturally black—though they were, were not bushy?

Perhaps I followed up this discovery with too eager a scrutiny. I do not know. At any rate, the next minute, though there came no order from within, the carriage drove off. I gave my last sou for a cab to follow in. A conviction was ripening in my brain, but behind it lay something else, something vaguely portentous—as yet, unguessable.

Unformulated though my intuition was, I somehow knew that it had been confirmed the moment I saw the great dome of the popular and fashionable Opéra Theater loom up out of the darkness. Almost before the Baron's carriage drew up to the pavement in front of the glittering entrance, I had left my own conveyance and was edging up through the crowd. The carriage stood there; the man sat inside and the door was not opened. I pressed up close, but again my luck failed me, I could not get a sight of that ear, or make sure about those eyebrows. I was getting desperately impatient. At any moment the carriage might move on, and I had no more money to follow it. I took a sudden resolution and stepped off the pavement. I had to glance down for an instant to make sure of my footing, and the man must have somehow taken alarm, for when I sprang upon the carriage step he was sitting turned away from me, looking out on the street, one elbow resting on the door sill and the arm thrown up so that ear and face were hidden.

At the same instant the carriage began to move. There was not a moment for delay. Desperately I seized the last chance. Grasping the handle, I shook the carriage door with all my strength,

and lifting my cane, beat upon the window. "Driver, quick! Whip behind!" the man within shouted hoarsely, and the next moment, as I sprang down, the lash cut round, taking me squarely across the cheek. I stood there an instant grinding my teeth with pain, but I was satisfied of one thing—that voice was not the Baron's!

So much, then, I knew, but behind it all was the infinitely more baffling something that I could not fathom. I returned to the pavement. Suddenly a young fashionable came through the crowd and, excitement visible in his looks, accosted two others of his kind.

"Have you heard it?" he cried. "The Englishman, the Viscount, has been found murdered—cudgeled to death, the police say, with a club or perhaps a heavy walking stick. And there is positively no clew."

I listened. I had half forgotten my smarting cheek.

"No clew!" exclaimed one. "And what of our friend the Baron?"

"Ah, the Baron—a natural question. To be sure, they say that the Englishman was just on his way to an assignation with our friend's wife. But set your mind at rest. The Baron is immune from suspicion. I myself saw him outside the club at almost the very moment the deed is supposed to have been committed."

"He was here at this theater not two minutes ago," put in the other. "I could swear to the carriage anywhere. Oh, no, the Baron is well out of the affair."

I heard them, and when they had finished I began to laugh. I could not control myself. They looked at me in surprise, no doubt thinking me in a state of intoxication—a vice I never indulge in public—but I did not mind. Still chuckling, I turned away. The burning slash on my cheek I felt no longer. I must go to the Baron. I had a funny story to tell him.



CYNIC—The cider of humanity turned to vinegar.



# A POET'S WIFE

By May Harris

**S**CENE—A large room charmingly arranged for comfort, with an open fire, chairs that invite repose, a few good pictures and a piano with music on the rack. There are some large azaleas in a pink profusion of bloom.

MRS. WESTMORE, a small, delicate-looking woman past middle age, with white hair and eager eyes, is seated close to the fire. She is dressed as an invalid, but with much care—as if she agreed to a condition but refused to be an apostle of its state. A high and inquiring spirit shows in every line of her face. MRS. PIERS, her daughter-in-law, who sits near her, is slender, with a small, pale face and irregular features. Her dark hair is simply arranged. The expression of her mouth is very sweet, and her general effect, with nothing of beauty, is saved from plainness by a quality of grace and charm that would have to be subtly felt rather than accurately defined. The only ornament she wears is her wedding ring. Her hands are remarkably beautiful—hands of a sort that seem to have a life of their own. It is late in a February afternoon and the effect in the room is almost one of twilight. The azaleas form a half-screen for the alcove of a window behind the two women. In this alcove, not visible to the other inmates of the room, a man is lying on a couch. He is not asleep, but in a reverie, lying on his back with one arm thrown above his head against the cushion. His face is fair, clean-shaven, with sharply defined, sensitive features, and his rather long, fair hair is tossed back from a fine forehead. It is the face of a dreamer, but of an enthusiast as well.

MRS. WESTMORE—I never expected to see you *agree* to it!

MRS. PIERS (*absently*)—To what, mamma?

MRS. WESTMORE—To your husband's attitude toward life—the disregard of duty—

MRS. PIERS—Duty is a horrid word, mamma. Allan and I never use it.

MRS. WESTMORE—He may never do so—very true! But *you* will, some day.

MRS. PIERS—Well, if I should be so foolish, I hope he will pay no attention!

MRS. WESTMORE—It's surprising— I remember your old ideas—there was a paper you wrote at college! It's hard to think you're the same person. (*She smiles with affectionate irony.*) You've absorbed his amazing ideas—like a sponge! How is it you've got his way of talking so pat—in less than a year?

MRS. PIERS—Mamma dear, you don't in the least know what his way of talking is. You've never talked an hour to Allan—really talked—in your life!

MRS. WESTMORE—Because he never talks to me!

MRS. PIERS—Dearest, you don't *talk* to him; you state opinions! You ought to admit Allan has some, too.

MRS. WESTMORE—Precisely. Just what I am asking you!

MRS. PIERS—Why don't you ask him? If you gave him half a chance, he'd tell you—truthfully.

MRS. WESTMORE—I can get them cheaper from you! Allan would make me pay—as he makes everybody. He's worth so much a line—or is it foot?



MRS. PIERS (*laughing*)—Mamma dear, I think you are clever enough not to let him be extortionate. Allan likes you.

MRS. WESTMORE (*looking in a big mirror opposite and straightening the lace at her throat*)—Oh, he does, Mary, he does! Because he thinks I'm as stupid as I look.

MRS. PIERS—But, mamma, if he thought you as sharp as you are—

MRS. WESTMORE—I know. Then he couldn't forgive me! He shines too brightly to see other candle lights. He'll come in directly, and fix me with his beautiful smile and listen and listen—and if I stop from exhaustion, he'll bring a cushion for my back and a footstool for my feet, and deep down be wondering how Mary could have such a mother!

MRS. PIERS (*laughing*)—Mamma, he doesn't know you—I don't believe I ever did myself!

MRS. WESTMORE—Daughters are too busy getting educated and married to get acquainted with their mothers! What I want to know is: do you know *him*?

MRS. PIERS—My husband!

MRS. WESTMORE—Yes—your husband.

MRS. PIERS (*indignantly*)—I know him, and I love him!

MRS. WESTMORE—Yes, dear, of course. Suppose I put it this way: Do you know Allan Piers—the poet?

MRS. PIERS—Certainly. He's my husband.

MRS. WESTMORE—Are you sure?

MRS. PIERS—Do you know, mamma, you're very strange—

MRS. WESTMORE—You don't feel you can answer my question.

MRS. PIERS (*with spirit*)—I don't feel you have the right to ask it.

MRS. WESTMORE—Your mother!

MRS. PIERS—Not of my husband.

MRS. WESTMORE—Mary, try to be loyal in the proper way. I'm interested in this—as a problem, it's true, but it's as your problem! Help out my analysis—not as if you were my child—

MRS. PIERS—That's a cold way to put it!

MRS. WESTMORE—Not at all. As my child, even, you're still an individual with rights, and as a married woman, maybe with wrongs!

MRS. PIERS (*resignedly*)—Mamma, you *are* amusing. You make me angry—but it is all so funny!

MRS. WESTMORE—I simply want to know Allan—in the abstract. If he's all he ought to be, why should you be afraid of discussing him?

MRS. PIERS—Afraid!

MRS. WESTMORE—It looks it! Don't be absurd, Mary. I never had a chance to study a poet before. It's always been their poetry.

MRS. PIERS—Their poetry is themselves.

MRS. WESTMORE—In that case—

MRS. PIERS—Well?

MRS. WESTMORE—They'd be hard to read sometimes.

MRS. PIERS—Do you know, mamma—

MRS. WESTMORE—Oh, yes, I know! If I weren't an invalid, you'd be very rude. But my kind of an invalid has rights! The doctors—

MRS. PIERS—Mamma, don't!

MRS. WESTMORE—And I really would like your honest opinion—

MRS. PIERS—About my husband? I've told you. I love him.

MRS. WESTMORE—But way down deep, your brain acts as well as your heart.

MRS. PIERS—I hope it will always act *with* my heart.

MRS. WESTMORE—They're independent at times. You've had time to find out. I know you weren't tired—you came back on my account, though you pretended it was time to settle down. You've had opportunity to study in these months



abroad. For though he loves you, he loves the beauty of the places to which he took you—perhaps the people—

MRS. PIERS—Would you have him forget his friends?

MRS. WESTMORE—Did he make love to the women?

MRS. PIERS—Do you know, mamma—

MRS. WESTMORE—That I strike you as coarse? But knowing it shan't stop me! I want to know—I'm almost capable of asking *him!*

MRS. PIERS—Do you think he'd tell you?

MRS. WESTMORE—If I asked him, I think he would! Were they pretty—those women?

MRS. PIERS—What women?

MRS. WESTMORE—His friends.

MRS. PIERS—Why do you think they were women? Why not men?

MRS. WESTMORE (*patiently*)—Were any of the women you saw—his friends, I mean—pretty?

MRS. PIERS (*in a burst of impatience*)—All of them!

MRS. WESTMORE—Not a penny to choose between them!

MRS. PIERS (*petulantly*)—Oh, yes, there was a choice!

MRS. WESTMORE—Was she an old friend?

MRS. PIERS—Weren't they *all* old ones?

MRS. WESTMORE—Yes—you were the only new one. I wonder—were you polite?

MRS. PIERS—I didn't object when he talked or walked or motored with them—or read his poems to them! Yes, I think I was polite.

MRS. WESTMORE—Wasn't that unwise? Did you know him well enough to do all that?

MRS. PIERS—Know him well enough—my husband!

MRS. WESTMORE—But, my dear, some people never know each other. They simply take for granted, or evade turning points, or fight like cat and dog!

MRS. PIERS—Well—we didn't fight like cat and dog.

MRS. WESTMORE—You don't need to tell me. But he has taken for granted, and you have analyzed. He thought he was safe! If it's hard for you, it's pretty bad for him—trailing an unsuspecting animal to his lair!

MRS. PIERS—I don't think that I am underhanded, mamma.

MRS. WESTMORE—Women can't help it, dear. They have to be. Men brazen out their openness—women have to crawl in the effort to circumvent it.

MRS. PIERS—Mamma—you force me to speak—

MRS. WESTMORE—The truth, my dear, I hope. If I were going to live I might betray you—I might even find out for myself! One never knows with a lot of time ahead! But as it is—

MRS. PIERS (*in a grieving voice*)—Mamma!

MRS. WESTMORE—As it is, I am safe as the—well, quite safe. So tell me.

MRS. PIERS (*bending over her mother with her lips on her hair*)—Mamma—were you *always* happy?

MRS. WESTMORE—With your father? Not at all! We fought like cat and dog!

MRS. PIERS (*in a shocked voice*)—Oh!

MRS. WESTMORE (*whimsically*)—It kept us excellent friends. My claws were never too sharp, and he excelled me in strength and determination. When we exhausted romance, we fell back on our differences of opinion. When he died—ah, my dear, I missed our daily battles almost as much as I missed him.

MRS. PIERS—I know how you adored each other. Fighting was your way—

MRS. WESTMORE—And analyzing's yours. Stop it, my dear. *That's* his business—a poet's life. What you've got to do is to take him for granted.

MRS. PIERS—Take what for granted—his old love affairs?



MRS. WESTMORE—And his new ones.

MRS. PIERS—Mamma!

MRS. WESTMORE—My dear, listen to me. Take his affair with you. If *it* could fade—and he went to the trouble to make it seem permanent—don't you suppose *they* can fade, too—like the colors of sunset?

MRS. PIERS—And leave what behind?

MRS. WESTMORE—Twilight—and the stars, and birds in the garden.

MRS. PIERS—Mocking birds!

MRS. WESTMORE—Everything is repetition.

MRS. PIERS (*violently*)—Then I don't want it!

MRS. WESTMORE—Darling, listen to me! It's the best you can hope to have. In life we take half-lovers—whatever we do in dreams. If you aren't thankful, you won't have that.

MRS. PIERS—Thankful! For what other people leave me?

MRS. WESTMORE—How much of the sunlight and the beauty of the world do you expect to have? Only your share.

MRS. PIERS—But he is mine!

MRS. WESTMORE—If he is a poet, he's the world's! Of course he may be a trickster, but whatever is divine about him is one with the stars and is for all people.

MRS. PIERS—They may have what he *does*; I want the man himself!

MRS. WESTMORE—Weren't we saying that what he does *is* the man himself? If you wanted to be cheaply, complacently happy, you should have married a little man. If you marry a big one, you have to take your share.

MRS. PIERS (*sadly*)—I only wanted to be the woman he loved—

MRS. WESTMORE—You wanted to padlock his heart and keep the key!

MRS. PIERS—He has mine in exchange.

MRS. WESTMORE—Mary, you are hopeless! Do you suppose he remembers that with pleasure when you are clanking his chains?

MRS. PIERS—I have done nothing to suggest to him—

MRS. WESTMORE—That you are miserable.

(MRS. PIERS *puts her hands over her face, and a dry sob reaches the ears of the man on the sofa, who lies very still. His mouth contracts a little, and the hand above his head closes rigidly.*)

MRS. WESTMORE—Mary—tell me just how bad it was. You can't talk to him! That would be the end, dear child. But to tell *me*—it will help you.

MRS. PIERS (*bitterly*)—You are curious!

MRS. WESTMORE—Yes—but I love you.

MRS. PIERS—Dear mamma, you think if I'd speak it would be less a poison. I wish I could laugh about it. It's all so little—if I tell it; there's merely my jealousy—that he likes to talk to, be nice to—other women. That one of them was beautiful, and one was witty, and another had brains!

MRS. WESTMORE—Well—suppose so. Don't resent it. Why don't you give him the finer essence of all these things—of the beauty he loves? The visible things aren't all of life!

MRS. PIERS—I know—but the visible things are the wings that carry us.

MRS. WESTMORE—It's the impulse, Mary, the impulse, that really carries. Otherwise what's a goose, and a swan? The one has wings as white and strong as the other. It's what's behind that really matters—the thought that points the way—that steers the flight. If you once fix *that*, what are all the women in the world? By the way, which one did he like best?

MRS. PIERS—The beautiful one—of course.

MRS. WESTMORE—Just so, dear. He's a poet.

MRS. PIERS—And you mean he'll always—

MRS. WESTMORE—Just as long as he lives.

MRS. PIERS—I don't think I can—bear it—



MRS. WESTMORE—But you love him?

MRS. PIERS (*flaming*)—Enough to let him burn me in little pieces if he wants to!

MRS. WESTMORE—Then let it be enough to be beautiful to him. Give him—in yourself—what he wants in other people. (MRS. PIERS *is silent for a long moment.*) You can, you know.

MRS. PIERS—I see what you mean, mamma. But when I think of how little I have to make from—and think of *him*—Allan Piers—

MRS. WESTMORE—An angel—no less.

MRS. PIERS (*softly*)—Yes, to me!

MRS. WESTMORE—There, my dear! You are beautiful!

(*A servant at the door announces the doctor.*)

MRS. WESTMORE (*rising*)—Show him into the library. No, Mary, don't come with me. He'll talk half an hour, and I won't mind. I love to tell him how stupid he is not to be able to cure me. It's a bit of daily fun. Think over what I've said, and—if there's anything—what I didn't say!

(*She goes out and closes the door. MRS. PIERS stands for a moment looking into the fire. She shivers slightly, and at last moves away to the window. As she passes the screen of azaleas, she sees her husband on the couch in the alcove. He lies there absolutely still. She is close to him before she sees him, and as she starts back, he puts out his hand quickly and catches hers.*)

MRS. PIERS—You heard—every word!

(PIERS *says nothing, but his grasp of her hand, if mute, is strong. His wife, first flushed and then pale, looks down at him in silence. His own look fills the pause—loads it with meaning. She has the sense of confession in its silent speech—as if he gravely agrees to her knowledge of flaws in his shield and will ask her decency to pardon. Also he seems to ask her comprehension of the finer spark that kindles all his fires—the spark that in itself holds brilliancy when the fires—those little fires built on alien altars—are ashes and forgotten. This spark seems to her at last as bright as the tear that clings to his lashes—is, perhaps, the tear itself, the light of a star quivering in the depth and mystery of the sea.*

*The long tenderness of his gaze holds hers. Something exquisite shows in her face, and PIERS very gently puts the hands he holds to his lips.*)



## VIOLETS

By Alvin Probasco Nipgen

THE violets are little nuns,  
 Begowned in modest blue;  
 Their rosaries at vespertide  
 Are beads of purest dew;  
 Their fragrance is the incense  
 They offer unto you.

You are their own Madonna  
 To whom their prayers arise;  
 Their crowns are violet halos  
 Reflected in your eyes;  
 And on your placid bosom  
 They rest—in Paradise.



## SONG

By Ethel Allen Murphy

WILT thou no more to me,  
Wild solace bring—  
Thou of the rainbow robe  
And shining wing?

Since thou art fled, my life  
All lonely lies,  
Dreary and tenantless,  
A house of sighs.

Thou wert too high for me;  
I could not rise;  
I was of earth and thou  
Wert of the skies.

Yet now I cannot go  
My earthly way,  
Since thou art gone, and dim  
Is all the day.

Not unassured, the trees  
For summer yearn—  
Yet I, what pledge have I  
Of Song's return?



## TANGOLED PROVERBS

By Addison Lewis

HE who hesitates is lost—when the orchestra is playing a one-step.

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy—but he'll ne'er tangoize.  
It is better to have dipped and slipped than never to have dipped at all.  
Those who live in dance houses are mere skin and bones.

Tango and the world tangos with you—dance and you dance alone.



# HUNT AND HIDE

By Beulah Marie Dix

AT six o'clock of a drear March morning, in the year of grace 1644, with the candles guttering and the fire on the hearth resolute not to blaze, Mistress Honor Sarsfield was setting forth the table in the paneled parlor of what had been her mother's house by Lewchester market place. A tall lass, slender and supple, was Mistress Honor, with a proud way of carrying her comely head and elves of laughter a-slumber in her darkly shadowed Irish eyes. Linsey-woolsey of dull red was her wear, but the neatly darned cuffs at her wrists and the tucker about her neck were edged with rare old lace.

Meager fare indeed it was that Honor was setting forth: a loaf of hard bread, the mere rind of a cheese and a jug of beer of the smallest.

"Fine feeding for a hungry man," quoth she, "and little like that the morrow bringeth better!"

Far off, in the mists of the fenlands that lay beyond the town, she could hear the thump and thunder of the great guns with which that resolute man and not to be denied, Noll Cromwell, had now these nine days battered Lewchester.

A heavy groaning warned her of the approach of ancient Deborah Proudfoot, the one servitor remaining to the household. About her face the old dame bore a wide white kerchief swathed.

"Pity upon us now!" cried Honor. "And how's thy tooth this morning, Debbie dear?"

"Little do I reckon of one poor tooth," groaned Deborah, "with my head and all like to go the way of flesh, once these marauding rebels be within our walls." She knelt, and, groaning still, mended

the reluctant fire. "Wellawell, mistress, and to think that you were this hour sitting in safety at Bellingham manor, had not my brave nursling, your brother, thrust him blindly into your affairs!"

"Sure, 'tis not at Bellingham I'd be sitting, and that's the truth," vowed Honor, as she quenched the ghastly candles. "Either it's I would be tramping the highroads—aye, but so I would, Debbie, and small harm to me, with my brother's doublet on my back. Hast never seen me in the old days don Owen's gear for the sport of it?"

"More shame to you!" snarled Deborah.

"Or, had I not the spirit to flee away on my two feet, with doom impending, then had I infallibly been given in marriage, as my good aunt did design. So had I been this hour Lady Vernham, and a soul undone, nor sat at Bellingham at all. But to good advantage came my bold brother with his troopers, and snatched me from this marriage most hateful."

"You know not whereof you prattle," sighed Deborah. "Sir Roger Vernham is a great gentleman."

"I ask his pardon." Honor swept a low courtesy. "I had thought him as rank a rebel as ever drew sword against his lawful king."

"I be fair sick of all this bringle-brangle," grumbled Deborah. "What matter on which side the good soul fighteth? 'Is a rich man, lass, and can keep ye soft. Aye, toss your proud head, an you will, but bethink ye: almost twenty, and your heritage slender enow, God wot, and now like to be naught, with your aunt affronted, and



this house that sheltereth us soon to be the prey of the spoilers. Oh, fool—and fool was Owen to abet you—to break this match that had set ye out of reach of want!”

Palely Honor leaned in the deep bow window, where now the daylight struggled through the leaded panes.

“Poor and unsought I may be,” she said, and in her proud voice was a hint of tremor. “So be it! Unwedded can I bide, and right cheerly, faith, but never will I yield me unto one would buy me, as a fine stepping filly is bought at a fair—one who ne’er hath pained him to look upon me or beseech me—who thinketh his mere say-so shall prevail! And thereto a rank rebel.” The passionate voice broke suddenly. “An old, hard, sour Puritan, to father my sons!”

“You saw him, when?” scoffed Deborah.

Honor stamped her foot.

“Never have I seen Sir Roger Verham, thou old wickedness!” she cried. “Nor do I wish to see him, and every day on my bare knees do I thank God and my brother Owen that I am escaped from him, even though it be into danger of warfare and of siege.”

She stopped, with held breath, and leaned a little in the window.

“Well, what’s to do?” sniffed Deborah, with one hand upon her aching cheek.

“’Tis Owen cometh from the court of guard,” spoke Honor. “His look is heavy, and—Deborah! What should it mean? Dost thou not mark, this long while the great guns of siege are silent?”

He had come storming up the stair into the paneled parlor, the boy cornet, Owen Sarsfield. Smooth of cheek, red-lipped and lightly builded, he looked mannerly meek, and was in truth the very devil in private brawl or open foray.

“Owen!” Honor flew to his arms. “What meaneth it? The guns are still.”

“Surrender,” he spoke hoarsely. “Re-enforcements are come to the rebels this night. Nay, hold thy skreeking, nurse!” He wheeled on Deborah. “No harm is purposed to the women at all, no, nor

to the men neither,” he added, for Honor’s cheering. “’Tis on good terms we yield ourselves, and march forth with such gear as we may carry. Go make your bags ready.”

At his bidding the old woman blessed herself and shuffled from the room.

“And what is this behind that thou’lt be telling me?” Honor challenged him.

“I must hence this hour.” The words came swift. “My sorrow it is to be leaving thee in thy need, best sister! But once let Lewchester surrender, is the rebel army released to fall on Nether Lowcroft garrison, to southward. A warning must to them straight, and I am he elect to bear it.”

He checked himself, and smiled on her.

“Wilt do somewhat for me, like a sweet lass? Make reasonable pretext to linger in the window yonder, and take note who standeth watching over the way.”

Quick with her pretext, she shifted a small table into the bow window, and upon it rearranged the scanty breakfast, the while she glanced carelessly into the market place below. Across the sodden pave few stragglers went upon their way, and hastily, under scourging of the rain. The more notable it was that in the doorway opposite loitered an out-at-heel fellow, who never budged.

Briefly Honor made report to her chafing brother.

“And what’s the meaning of this at all?”

“The town is reeking with spies,” he made answer, with a ready oath. “Colonel Legge sent for me too openly, and held me too long in speech, the old grandam! And I known for the lad would likely be hurled upon a desperate errand! ’Tis my heels the fellow hath been dogging, and will dog them yet, a thousand devils toss him!”

Hardily he swaggered to the table, and, casting himself upon the window bench, began his breakfast.

“Let him gaze his fill and be hanged to him!” he swore.

With slim hands interlaced beneath her firm chin, Honor regarded him.

“So long as thou sittest in sight, the spy is like to bide?” she questioned.



"Aye."

She clapped her hands.

"Owen! 'Tis the lovely plan I've lighted on to make of yon fellow a jack-fool, and set thee safe upon the way. Quit the window, thou, cast off thine uniform, and let me into it straight. Then will I sit me in the window for the fellow's contenting, and while he watcheth, canst thou, in thy dress of everyday, slip forth at the rear door."

The boy looked on her with face a-kindle.

"'Twould serve, yes. But thou—'twere to thy peril, haply."

"No, no," she laughed, as she unbound her hair. "What peril should it be at all? An hour hence will I shift me back into my petticoat, ere ever the rebels enter the town."

In the end he yielded to her guidance, as in long years he had often yielded to the headlong sister that was his elder. A swift dodging in and out behind the tall leathern screen and the door to his chamber adjacent, a tossing to and fro of garments, then there came disheveled from the chamber Owen Sarsfield, in gray frieze and shoes of leather, and from behind the screen sidled a gallant but little more effeminate than Owen's self in looks, arrayed complete the cavalier, in riding boots of Spanish leather, in doublet and breeches of black kersey, with a sash of smashing scarlet, the King's colors, girded round the slender hips.

Boy that he was, Owen laughed outright to view the transformation.

"'Tis myself I'd swear it was, troth," said he. "But what wilt thou be making with my pipe and tobacco?" he questioned anxiously, as he saw those treasures fetched forth from his lendled pockets.

Quite featly she filled the pipe, and lighted it with a coal from the hearth, then sauntered to the window seat and cast herself lolling among the cushions.

"Well done!" quoth he.

"Do thy part as well!" she answered.

Five minutes later, with an old hat upon his head and a good rapier at his side, Owen waved a farewell and disappeared down the rearward stair. The

echo of his footsteps died. The ancient house was very still.

Leaning among the cushions, in full view of the rainy market place and him who watched, Honor smoked decorously at her brother's pipe. She found it rank, so much so that presently she saw the corners of the room swimming in sickish mist. Carefully she put the pipe upon the table, and laid her head upon a cushion. She was comfortable, and, after nine days' booming of the guns she found the silence soporific.

"Only a moment, for Owen's better security! Then will I shift my clothes and away," she murmured, and, as she murmured, passed quietly over the brink into slumber and forgetfulness.

## II

A door below had clashed open. Steps were pounding up the stair.

Honor rubbed her eyes. "Good truth, I must have slept!"

From the market place and all the cutthroat byways of the town echoed the rumble of drums and the clang of bugles. Into the paneled parlor hurtled her brother's orderly.

"*Al estandarte!* Come your ways, sir!" he warned.

She stumbled to her feet.

"What's the hour? And what's to do?" she cried.

"Past ten o' the clock, sir, and the rebels come this hour, a murrain on 'em!"

If the rebels came this hour, oh, had she time to shift her clothes and gain good Caverley's friendly house? Better forth as she was. She set Owen's hat on her head and cast his cloak about her. She drew the folds of the cloak across her face, caught up Owen's sword, and, with the orderly at her heels, clattered down the stair and into the swarming market place. The wind had risen. The rain came whipping in long lashes. Good excuse she had to cuddle, sheltered, in the ample cloak.

Caverley's house lay eastward, in the High Street. Thither she started to fight her way, amid the throng of soldiers and of officers, drummed out of quarters



and flocking to their several colors. But at that moment came running down the High Street Barriscale, the captain of Owen's troop.

"No time to lose, Sarsfield!" he shouted, and clapped a stalwart hand on Honor's shoulder.

No hour was this for explanation. Slipping in Owen's most unhandy boots, she plunged, with her two companions, down a black alley, galloped across a base court, dropped over a wall, and, a little blown with running, found herself neatly placed in the midst of Owen's mustering comrades.

"Better so!" she thought swiftly, while she felt her pulses jumping with excitement rather than with fear. "The troops will be suffered to march forth with honor, so hath Owen said. I'll forth with them, and then a word to Captain Barriscale, when leisure serve, and he'll find shift to send me somewhither, even though it be to Bellingham."

So she buckled on her sword, with an air most jaunty, and at that moment heard the cry, "Sarsfield! Cornet Sarsfield!" and here came a messenger speeding, with word that Cornet Sarsfield should report himself at once at the gatehouse.

The shadow of the grim, gray building fell chill upon her. Groping, she made her way through dusty half-light into the stark chamber above. Six officers were there gathered. The one, Sir Thomas Claverack, a lean, gray man, she knew for chief commander there in Lewchester. The other five, from troops not Owen's, were outside her knowledge. She could not fail to note, however, that little joy was in the look of them.

"Sarsfield?" Sir Thomas greeted her, with bare a glance. "Then is our tale complete. Gentlemen, haply you have heard rumor of what must be. Good terms we have won for the loyal townsmen and for our garrison, but on condition, mark you, that you six, here assembled, be surrendered to the mere mercy of the conqueror, to deal with as him list."

"God's word, no!" cried one, a shabby lieutenant, with a mouth that twitched.

"It is better that one man die than

that many perish," Sir Thomas cut him short. "Gentlemen—"

"We are content, Sir Thomas," said one, who wore a captain's coat, a long-limbed fellow with black eyes.

"Content," the others echoed.

"God be wi' you, boys!" Sir Thomas spoke abruptly, and abruptly left the chamber.

Speechless, Honor looked upon the doomed company, of which she suddenly was one. The shabby lieutenant began to laugh hysterically. The black-eyed captain wheeled and smote him on the mouth.

"Be still, thou!"

"But wherefore?" Honor found tongue. "What is it at all? What have we done, they to be using us so?"

The black-eyed captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Many for many virtues excellent!" he quoted, with a wry smile. "He yonder"—he indicated the lieutenant—"made overfree with a yeoman's daughter on a foray by Eastcombe. He, there, saw reason good to forsake the Parliament party and cleave to the King, after Newbury fight. These two and myself, Paul Tregony"—he bowed—"we held a forced promise utterly void. Breakers of parole the rebels deem us. And you, Sarsfield? What's the quibble hath brought you into our luckless fellowship?"

"God knoweth, and I not at all!" quoth Honor, desperate, while she wondered what dire passages in Owen's past were haply hid from her.

Again Tregony shrugged.

"An inveterate enemy you seem to have, in sooth. He came but yesternight, with the reinforcements to the rebels, and would have it that your name be added to the list of the proscribed. Come, come, lad, you must know what grudge he beareth you, and wherefore. A colonel of the rebels he is, and his name Sir Roger Vernham."

### III

OUTSIDE the slits of casements the rain fell drearily through the crawling hours. Within the narrow chamber



presently the fire died down, and there was no wood wherewith to kindle it anew. The shabby lieutenant sat biting his nails by the cold hearth. The turncoat from the Parliament paced up and down the chamber and babbled his hopes of ransom. The three who had broken parole smoked and played at ruff with the thumbled cards that Tregony had taken from his pocket. Courteously they bade "young Sarsfield" take a hand, but Honor, huddled in her cloak, refused.

"It's destroyed I am with a raging toothache," she vowed, and muffled her face the closer.

Declare her sex now, to this choice ruffianage? Not to be thought on! And how should the declaration save her, truth? Honor Sarsfield were doubtless to this monster Vernham a prey more desirable even than Owen. And what harm was he meaning to Owen, the poor lad? Well, she had him foiled there, in faith, and serve him right!

The turncoat halted at the window and pushed the casement wide.

"They ha' come in by the North Gate likely," said he. "The yellow-scarves, I mean—the rebels. They are disarming our men in the court below."

"God—bless 'em!" sang Tregony. "'Will send a file, no doubt, to take us into ward. 'Tis thy turn to play, Jock."

The lieutenant by the fire rose from his place, and went into the corridor, and came again.

"Their men are posted at the stair-foot," said he. "Like a trapped rat—a rat!" He turned to Honor. "They have us all unarmed, save you. Lend me your sword, Sarsfield!"

"Aye," bade Tregony, as he dealt the cards. "Better so! Lend it, Sarsfield!"

She slipped off the baldric and gave the sword into the dry hands that trembled.

Thus armed, he passed out at the door, and those within the prison chamber waited breathless to hear the sounds of struggle on the stair. Tregony held a card uplift in his hand. The man called Jock let his pipe go out. Upon the silence thudded the sound of a heavy body falling in the corridor.

Tregony let fall his card and went into the corridor. He came again and resumed his dealing.

"Better so!" he shrugged. "For he would have disgraced us in his dying, no doubt, such death as they had likely made him die. He lieth now without, and his throat slit with Sarsfield's sword. Play, Jock!"

She thanked her God that no call was theirs to be looking at her. Sick at the heart, she gripped the edge of the bench whereon she sat.

Upon her silent praying, the door was thrust open. On the threshold, armed and accoutered, stood a tall cornet, who wore the yellow scarf of the Parliament service.

"Which of you all is Owen Sarsfield?"

Without will of her own, it seemed, she rose to her feet and stood steadily, because she stood in Owen's place.

"'Tis myself is Sarsfield. What's your will with him?"

"My orders are to deliver you forthwith into the custody of Sir Roger Vernham."

He stood aside in the doorway. With a gesture, he bade her down the stair.

"God be wi' ye, boys!" said Honor, even as Sir Thomas Claverack had said it.

With the cloak cast round her and the hat low on her forehead, she went across the corridor, where the floor was wetly stained, and down the stairway. Under the arch of the great gateway torches were already lighted, and their flames plucked hither and thither with the wind. By the flickering light she saw two yellow-scarved troopers, mounted and waiting, with the water dripping from their helmet rims and slithering down their dulled corselets.

"Sarsfield, sir?" said one, short spoken.

The cornet nodded.

Honor felt her left arm caught into a wrenching grasp by the mounted man nearest. Rasp of wet leather upon flesh that shrank, and she found her wrist securely strapped to the trooper's saddle bow.

"Ye've a girl's hand, Sarsfield," said



he. "Now to see if you can walk like a man. We've a league and better afore us, and hell's own weather. March!"

#### IV

FOR two hours they marched in the growing darkness, through rain and wind and mud that, in the broken places where great guns had wheeled, was oftentimes knee deep. They swung aside into sodden fields, to give to some great officer the right of way. They stood for freezing minutes, wedged in the press of wagons that bore food into the town. They halted under a pent roof, while the troopers comforted them with beer and asked after the way that infallibly they had lost.

A hole in the quagmire of a road was trap to Honor's feet. She stumbled forward, was jerked erect by the strap that bound her, and reeled, gasping, against her captor's boot.

"But it's no step farther I can be walking," she said, quite conversationally, as Owen might have said it, "and the ankle twisted under me entirely."

Answer she had promptly in the shape of a blow across the shoulders delivered with the flat of a sword. Weep or swear it was with her that moment, and—shades of that good aunt at Bellingham!—she swore with conviction, in chosen oaths of Owen's most atrocious.

Thwack, rang a gauntleted hand upon her cheek.

"That for thy blasphemy!" spoke the trooper at whose knee she leaned. "March on!"

In seething silence she marched. Were she but Owen! Oh, for a little hour were she but Owen! To kill that hulking coward! To kill! She plunged her free right hand into the breeches pocket that was Owen's. Against the numbed flesh she presently was aware of the contact of cold metal.

She scarcely dared to believe the witness of her own fingers that said that this was knife of Owen's. Craftily she uncased the blade, and held it ready beneath her cloak.

"If he strike me again!" she thought.

They were halted in the lee of a low wall, along the length of which rose poplars, inky black against a sky less black. Just over the narrow way light streamed from cottage windows, across which steeled the rain from the thatched roof.

"And thou sayest this is the lane by Swinnerton's Close," growled the chief trooper, "and I say thou'rt a jack-pudding, and this is the byway unto Austen's Mere, and our journey's end! Now to the proof!" He swung from his saddle. "Have an eye to him!" he bade across his shoulder as he thundered on the cottage door.

She had the bulk of the horse between her and the remaining guard, and in her hand the knife. Frantically she sawed at the wet strap, while she harked to the trooper daffing with the maid who had opened to him. She heard the door slam upon his entrance into light and warmth and comfortable drink, and knew that his fellow leaned forward, all lost in envy of so good a fortune.

Freed of her bonds in that instant, she cast aside the cloak that would hamper her and sprang for the low wall. As she hurled herself across it, she heard the shout that told her that her flight was marked, and next second the crash of the clumsy trooper who came scrambling after her. Sick with terror, she fled soundlessly in the merciful shadow of the wall. In the open garden she could hear her pursuer threshing about and bawling to his mate to fetch a lanthorn. She must out of the garden, and, in that desperate thought, she felt herself tripped and falling forward.

For a second she lay breathless, then she groped about her, and realized that she had fallen into a deep dry ditch, all overgrown with creepers. Frantically she plucked across the torn patch of inky sky the tangle that she had displaced in falling, then she turned and wriggled her way along the ditch, deeper and deeper beneath the blessed vines that were her safety.

With her hand upthrust, she presently touched clammy masonry. A culvert was before her, with what perils she might not picture, and behind her were



the troopers, with whose mercy she had made acquaintance. Sobbing a prayer, she squirmed into the black of the culvert, on and on, for suffocating moments, until she thanked her God for blackness less black before her, and, all torn and disheveled, writhed forth into the free air and the cleansing rain.

All forgetful of her twisted ankle, Honor stumbled to her feet and ran at her best speed across a mired field, through a hedge, across a plashy meadow. Before her rose the dun bulk of a haystack that promised for the moment shelter. She stumbled into the lee of it, and in that instant felt an arm clapped round her neck and a hand that smothered the scream upon her lips.

"Cry out," spoke a voice in her ear, "and I'll twist thy misbegotten neck. Answer me softly now: art thou for King or Parliament?"

To say "For Parliament" were to stand convict a liar the instant that she were haled into the light, with that scarlet sash about her.

"For the King," she faltered.

Instantly she felt the grasp about her neck relax.

"Then stand we in like case, i' faith. Thy name?"

"Sarsfield."

"God's light! Well met! For I am Tregony."

As if he were the friend of her bosom, she clutched his arm.

"Oh, well met indeed! And how didst thou make shift to flee them?"

"By the casement, as soon as the dark came down," he said indifferently. "'Tis but to drop thirty feet into the outer ditch, and a chance to land with limbs unbroken."

"The others?"

Through the dark she marked his shrug.

"Now shall we shog?" quoth he.

Together they plodded through the dark and the rain. Fields there were, with the turf all slimed with wet, farmsteads where they walked warily, roadways that they crossed as hunted things. Then there were runlets that grew brooks, and brooks that grew streams, and then water where they plowed knee

deep, endless water, wan under the black of the night and shattered with the fall of rain.

"Austen's Mere," quoth Tregony.

Heavily they gained the melting shore. She sank down at his feet, in a wretched heap of weariness and despair.

"I cannot farther, no, not one step."

"Even so I feared," said he.

"Thou wilt leave me?"

Question she made it, never a plea, for she stood in Owen's place.

Spoke Tregony:

"There's a lass by Oxford waiteth for me—aye, and for her marriage lines. My child shall not be born nameless—as I was born. In despite of God and man and devil, I break the rebel lines this night. Thou hast a knife, I take it, Sarsfield?"

She nodded.

"Give it me!"

She gave.

"God be wi' thee!" she bade, with stiff lips that she would not suffer to tremble. "Forget not that Owen Sarsfield was good comrade to the end."

He swung back on his heel and stood above her.

"Seest thou, lad, yonder, that light? 'Tis a farmstead standeth alone, and haply quarters some of their officers. Best get thee thither and surrender. Thou canst never live here the night through, and thou hast a face will doubtless win some fond woman to pity thee."

Then, without further parting, he was gone, and she sat alone beneath the scourging rain.

## V

How she reached that distant light she never knew. Over the last wall she dragged herself, and dropped into a pashy barnyard. Right in her face a dog sprang yapping, and, as she kicked him aside, she was aware of the sound of running feet, of doors flung open and of the light of a lantern bobbing toward her.

Collared and hustled, she stood in the midst of a dim stable, swarmed with shadows, where a bodyguard of men,



who wore the Parliament colors, were but just dismounted; and, thrusting through them, she saw a tall officer come striding. He halted, in the silence that his presence compelled, and, taking the lantern from the man that held it, flung its light squarely upon her.

A haggard youth enough to look, she stood revealed, cloakless and hatless, mired, bedraggled, with a dark bruise on one cheek and a wrist frayed raw. The man who scrutinized came, too, into sharp relief—a tall fellow, broad in the shoulders and narrow in the flanks, amazing light on his feet for a man so big, his years perhaps thirty, his hair and mustaches crisply chestnut, his eyes deep set and gray, and their look, as he bent it upon her, never so little quizzical.

"For the King?"

"Aye," said she.

"Officer?"

"Cornet." A little, as she spoke, she strove to draw her arm from the grip of the man that held her. "And what will you be after doing with me now?"

Owen had never asked that question, nor had Owen spoken in a voice of lagging sweetness, to clutch at a man's heart strings.

The rebel officer, being, it seemed, a man of commendably few words, shoved the lantern into grasp of whomsoever would take it, and, stepping to Honor's side, cupped his hand skillfully beneath her elbow.

"March!" he counseled.

With head bowed, she stumbled as she was guided, across a dooryard and into a farmhouse kitchen. Folk there seated rose up, respectful. Her conductor pushed past them, and, thrusting open the door to what should be the farmhouse parlor, shoved her into his quarters.

"Sit down," he bade.

She snuggled into a corner of the settle by the hearth. The room was candlelit and firelit, she saw. Bread and meat and wine stood ready on the table. Spare garments were cast upon a stool. A bed stood in one corner.

"Drink!"

He stood beside her with a cup. She tossed off the draught, as she was bid-

den. Suddenly he took her by the sleeve, and lifting her arm, not ungently, scrutinized the red marks upon her wrist.

"So!" he whistled.

A welcome diversion indeed, his orderly came then into the room. Into his hands the officer tossed his wet cloak, and stood revealed in fine green broadcloth and laced collar, colonel of rebel horse, to read his insignia. Casting himself into an elbow chair, he gave his boots to be pulled off, and drew on dry shoes. So doing, he looked across at Honor.

"You're wet," quoth he.

"It's destroyed I am," said she, "with lashings of more water than ever Gaffer Noah saw."

"Draw off his boots," he bade the orderly.

"You will not!" cried she, in panic.

Inside the boots she knew her legs encased in neat silk stockings of scarlet, most natural for Mistress Honor but a little surprising in her brother Owen. Worse still, she knew, from doleful experience that day in borrowed boots, that her feet were smaller far than was right and fitting for Owen or any young man.

"Draw 'em off!" bade the rebel colonel, adamant.

Off they came. Agonized, she tucked her scarlet toes into the shadow beneath the settle.

"It's freezing I am," she sniffed.

"Give him a cloak!" came the curt order.

She fell upon the cloak with thankfulness, and flung it about her, limbs outstretched upon the settle, clear of the draughts and of too ardent scrutiny. In her captor's eyes she saw, or else the light flickered at fault, a gleam of merriment. But all he said, and in dry voice enough, was:

"Give him to eat."

Master Colonel at the table, and Master Cornet toasting upon the settle, fell severally upon their suppers. The orderly was gone. Silence ruled for a space.

"And so," spoke the Colonel suddenly, "you're newly from ward, bound,



a prisoner. Then you are of the six were this day excepted from amnesty."

She nodded.

"Which of them?"

"Sarsfield," she murmured.

"Humph! And what's your crime?"

"No crime at all," she cried, "as I take heaven and yourself to be my witness this hour!" Impulsively she thrust aside her trencher, and, scrambling to the other end of the settle that was nearest him, knelt, holding by the back of it. "'Tis my private enemy it is," she gulped. "One Vernham, and a bloodthirsty devil, faith, that will be my undoing, and no harm in me to him at all, the savage wretch—save that I would be plucking my poor sister forth of his villainous clutches, and she liefer to be married to a very Bucaboo than himself. And for that he would destroy me, without honor, as is like him, nor accept"—she here bethought her that she stood in Owen's place—"the duel that I would be offering him in proper satisfaction, the coward and mere poltroon that he is! And now 'tis to his bloody vengeance they'd be delivering me quick, and no help left me at all but in yourself; and oh, sir, for the love of pity and mercy and fair dealing, won't you be standing 'twixt him and me?"

She stopped, breathless, and sank back upon her heels. For at the Colonel's word, upon a sounding knock, there entered the room that very rascal at whose saddlebow she had trudged the weary way from Lewchester to Austen's Mere.

"Well, sirrah, where's your prisoner?" rapped out the Colonel.

Sag-jawed, as one who views a ghost, the fellow stared at Honor.

"Why, there he is," he said, "Sir Roger Vernham!"

## VI

VERY deliberately, with the trooper sent from the room, Sir Roger Vernham filled him a pipe. Deliberate still, he strolled to the hearth and lighted it with a glowing coal.

"Well," quoth he, while he smoked enjoyably, "touching that duel you were fain to proffer, Cornet Sarsfield?"

She lifted her scarlet face from contemplation of her scarlet stockings.

"'Tis like I deemed you—you to be mocking, and myself defenseless! 'Tis yourself hath the power now to mis-handle me—to insult—"

"Truth," said he, "'tis yourself hath done what insulting hath here been done. Eh, my lad? 'Bloodthirsty devil,' 'mere poltroon' and the rest of it!"

"And what's a few words at all that never broke bone," she cried, "over against the way you've had me handled, with your stage play now of compassion—and I wish that your supper had choked me in the eating! Seventy league, at least, and the mud to my neck, at your villainous troopers' saddlebows, and mercy, d'ye call it? And this—the mark they've set upon my face—and ye call that courtesy, be-like?"

"Truth to tell," said he, "the man I bade to fetch you, my foster-brother, was stayed along of a gunshot in the leg. So came it that you had other conduct hither than was my design. But what odds? A march in the rain, and a clout on the ear—what's that to a tall youth like yourself, and the King's officer, to boot?"

"And what harm had I ever done you," she faltered, "you to be after using me so?"

"Deepest harm in the world," said he. So gravely he spoke that she lifted her swimming eyes and looked on him.

"Hark 'ee, Master Sarsfield," he went on, "wherefore did you thrust in to break the match was making between your lady sister and myself?"

"Because my lady sister would none of it, nor of you," she muttered, sullen as a very boy.

"So! She did not then affect me?"

"Devil a bit!" quoth she, with vicious relish.

"Wherefore?"

She shrugged.

"A mere maid's whimsy, faith! 'Twas a crazed notion of hers that she would be wooed in person, and for love of such indifferent charms as are hers, not sold to the first churlish comer should have a mind to her heritage, belike, and—"



She stopped still as she met the look in Vernham's eyes.

After an instant he knocked the ash from his pipe and laughed, but his laughter was not altogether reassuring.

"Sarsfield," said he, "by times you've the look of a lass, but that giveth you not her license. Bridle that tongue o' yours, else I may be moved to take you in hand and teach you manners."

Tingling, she sat with eyes downcast. A nightmare surely this must be. What was she doing in Owen's breeches, here in preposterous speech with the man of all the world from whom she had fled?

"D'ye know"—his voice came whimsical, and she felt that he stood watching her—"at this moment, Sarsfield, you're wondrous like your sister."

She looked up, flaming.

"The devil I am! And how do you know that at all?"

"Because," said he, "I've seen her."

Honor flew to her feet. "Where? Tell me! Tell me, good Sir Roger!"

The smile of him would have exasperated an angel. She sat down again, seething.

"And how should it concern you, Sarsfield?"

"Not in the least," vowed she.

"Well," said he, "that you may sleep the easier, 'twas six months ago, and I coming quietly, with another name, into the country hard by Bellingham, on a mission of the Parliament I serve. Of a night of full moon and frosty it was that I rode across the fields, and I heard then the bellnote of hounds, and here the hunt came flying, and young Diana it was in the van, in a coat of scarlet, and her hair the night itself. Jump at that moment, down goeth a horse and the rider with him, and the first to be at the beast's head, as he lasheth out, my young Diana."

"The first but one," cried she, with flushing cheeks, "and that other was yourself."

"How knew you that, lad?"

"'Twas my sister's tale," she murmured.

"Well," said he, "amid those country squires, her ill-assorted comrades, 'twas she alone had wit and skill to know

what was to do to give the poor fellow ease that was thrown, and did it featly. The half of an hour, perhaps, I labored at her side, ere I slipped away, for my business would bear no lingering. But to myself I went vowing: 'Yon is the lass that would ride with a laugh at the side of the man of her choosing, aye, unto death would she ride, and with her warm arms would she fend away death at the last. And yon is the lass, by God's splendor, shall mother no sons but mine own!'"

He paused to relight his pipe, and he spoke a shade louder and less earnestly.

"Little time is there these days to come making of court. I sped my letters by friendly hands to the Dowager of Bellingham. All was clapped up, I judged, and I had before me the hope to ride to my lass and say: 'Dost remember that night beneath the hunter's moon?' And meantime, my good Cornet, you must storm headlong in and bear the girl away to God knoweth what of danger and devil knoweth what of evil counsel whispered into her ear. And so d'ye wonder, my lad, that this night I've been sore tempted to send ye supperless to bed—or worse?"

She turned her face from him that she might hide the tears that suddenly were torture against her eyelids. What had she done? In her mere blindness what had she done? For here she saw complete the man that fancy had painted that her mate must be, big and kindly, good lover, good defender, her man indeed, indeed, who had found and known her under the hunter's moon; and now, in mere blind petulance, she had spurned his love.

But no, but no, she vowed, high-hearted. Somehow she would trace back the way to where the path so fatally had forked. To return to Bellingham, somehow, as Owen Sarsfield! Then, months hence—oh, months, for she should blush to face him, with the memory of this night too fresh—to send for him, for the sake, as she would say, of thanking him for kindness shown her brother—and then—and then—oh, yes, she could trace back the way, thank heaven!

"Sarsfield!"



She sensed that he had paused behind the settle and stood looking down upon her. She nodded, without looking at him, but unconsciously she swayed a little toward his voice.

"Don't be downhearted," he said gruffly. "D'ye mind, I was jesting with you but now. The worst you have to fear from me is behind you. You'll get no harm henceforth from me or any that belong to me."

She caught breath, half choked with the hope that had her by the throat.

"'Tis like yourself," she stammered, "and honorably proffered, faith. And—and—you'll be taking ransom, then? You'll be letting me straight to Bellingham?"

"I will not," said he. He laid both hands upon her shoulders, in a grasp gentle enough but not to be shaken off. "It's right here you'll stay, my brave Cornet—oh, well enough used; have no fear of that—but right here, and no going hence until your lady sister come to fetch you."

## VII

To prolong the attitude were awkward. Vernham took his hands promptly from Honor's shoulders.

"You're perishing wet," he said lightly. "Best strip off your uniform and into bed with you."

She scrambled to her knees upon the settle and across the back implored him.

"But good Sir Roger! You know not. Faith, it's so fain I am to go home."

"You're not the only one of your party feebleth that longing in his heart this night," he answered.

"And—and my tooth hath been raging now these twenty hours, and myself half crazed with it," she whimpered.

"Try a hot raisin," he counseled kindly.

In desperation she beat upon the settle with her small clenched fist.

"But Sir Roger! Man, dear! If ye would but understand! If ye let me home—'tis no peace at all I'll leave that sister o' mine. I'll tell her 'tis the fine man ye are—a heart of gold entirely—a paladin for courage. I'll tell her—"

"Yes," said he, "but I'd liefer be telling her a thing or two myself. Stop your talking now and to bed with you, my good brother-in-law that is going to be!"

"I will not!" she cried. "A devil scour the smile from your face, and plague light on me ever I thought ye kindly, and the pestilence consume both King and Parliament went to war and brought the trouble on me! And my tooth is one red howling torment, and my heart is broke, and it's here I'll sit till the light of morning."

"You will not," said he. "A boy in your first breeches you are, and not sense in your empty young head to make yourself comfortable; but it's good care I'll take of you for your sister's sake, and so soon as this pipe is cleaned I'll be taking you out of that wet coat and—"

"Don't you dare!" she gasped, but hopelessly.

He had stepped to the hearth and deliberately was cleaning out his pipe. The time of respite hideously was short.

"Sarsfield," he spoke, without looking round, and once more his voice was grave, "'tis pity, is it not, that, after all, I cannot win you to trust me—for your sister's sake!"

Before she could frame an answer he wheeled abruptly, but not for any word of hers, unspoken. In the kitchen just without was sudden hubbub, crash of overturned plenishings, skreeking of women, loud uproar of men. Through the door, burst open, a rosy wench, the daughter of the house, came flying.

"Harrow! Harrow! 'Tis the devil is loose!" she cried.

Right at her heels tumbled a trooper, with his gashed forehead dripping blood to blind him, and across his body hurtled a rangey man, scarlet-sashed, with eyes black coals, and in his hand a knife that reeked.

"Tregony!" gasped Honor.

In despite of God and man and devil, he would break the lines that night, and in his path to hinder stood Vernham, quite unarmed.

She shrieked, as never yet, 'tis to be hoped, a lad has shrieked, for with lightning swiftness Vernham had struck at Tregony with his fist, and swifter than



lightning, Tregony had stabbed beneath the upraised arm.

With shiver of splintered glass, Tregony had plunged through the casement and out into the night. Limp upon the settle leaned Vernham, with blood dribbling thinly from his breast across his brave green doublet. Round his neck, to the admiration of the troopers and the housefolk, with whom the room suddenly was thronged, clung Honor Sarsfield.

"Oh, my dear!" she cried brokenly. "Thou shalt not die until thou hearest me say it—dear my man!"

Suddenly she stood erect.

"And pray you, what do you stare at?" she challenged the company, with frosty lids. "'Tis Sir Roger's betrothed wife I am—aye, and our banns already called in Bellingham church, and no other way could I reach my dear love's side but thus disguised. Bestir yourselves now, ye gazing gabies! Cease thy bawling, hussy," she rounded on the girl, "and fetch warm water and bandages. Cordial, too! Be quick!" She stamped her foot. "And if any man amongst ye have wit at all, clear the room!"

The wounded man raised heavy lids above eyes that still were quizzical.

"Best obey her," he counseled wanly, "this wife of mine!"

## VIII

THE dawn came grayly into the farmhouse parlor. The rain was over.

In the bed in the far corner the wounded man stirred.

"Dear love!" said he.

Shod with the house daughter's Sunday shoon and muffled in Vernham's cloak, Honor leaned from the elbow chair where she had kept her watch these hours beside him.

"'Tis thy turn now to bridle tongue at my bidding," quoth she. "So saith the surgeon. But he saith also that the

wound goeth not deep to fatality. Oh, God be thanked therefor!"

She leaned her head against the bedside. She felt his hand laid gently on her boyish loosened hair.

"Tell me," he said, "the man—"

"A desperate soul, escaped from ward. He was taken of some stragglers and fetched hither. He broke from them in the kitchen, and cut his way out."

"Fled hence?"

"Aye," said she. "To advantage, he found a horse of the guards stood ready saddled."

"Speed him!" he smiled. "I owe him much, in faith!"

"Oh, Roger machree!" she laughed, near tears, as she looked upon him. "Thou owest him naught but the willfullest, wickedest, headstrongest jade in three kingdoms, that deserveth no whit the good fortune shall be hers."

"In Bellingham church," said he, "they shall call the banns?"

"So soon as shall like thee," said she. "Art thou not he that holdeth me captive to compel my will?"

He laid her hand against his lips, but his eyes were quizzical.

"And who's the bold warrior could compel thy will at all?"

"No need is thine to be mocking at my speech," quoth she.

"'Tis a trick of the tongue is dear to me," he answered, "and mine of right, for my mother—rest her merry soul!—came out of green Ireland."

"Then with Irish wits in thine head," she teased, "why wast thou not discovering afore 'tis no lad I was at all?"

The answer left her pondering for long, through the sunny hours whilst he slept, with her hand held fast:

*"And art thou then so sure what moment it was I was blessing God for that I had discovered that same?"*

"Our married life," she murmured, with glad conviction, "faith, I see 'twill not be dull entirely!"



THE greatest happiness: To consider oneself wiser than the mass. The greatest misery: To be wiser than the mass.



# THE PASSING

By Donald Francis McGrew

IT was a quaint railway station, elevated the height of a "story" above the level of the street. You sat on one side, with a high French window open at your back, and looked across the rows of settees with their loads of parcel-encumbered humanity, and so out under the eaves of the trainshed at a panorama of city buildings that, shouldering one another in close array, descended step by step to a shining river far below. Here and there, between the buildings, parks appeared, and shady maples; here and there you caught the silver gleam of the age-old river sandwiched between two dun-colored modern structures; bathed in the film of spring and sunshine, it became a wonder view, a rest for eyes and brain. And around you the suggestion of the whole was carried out, for here, lending color to and relieving the monotony of the milk white Puritan marble, were numerous flower plots, ingeniously set in ivy-grown brass.

You came from a night of debauch, from sleeplessness, from the heinous clatter of an alarm clock, from a secretary who thrust the last letter into your impatient hand, from a sleepy-eyed messenger whose tidings opened your own a startled wide; you passed through one of the drops in the stream of humanity which, draining prismatically through this common port, spread flood-like over the face of the earth, rushing to births, to boys in trouble at school, to new positions, to the averting of catastrophe, to marriages, to business engagements, to stricken bedsides. Yet always, if you had not become too matter of fact, you caught a paradoxical draught of the life within life from the

environments of this monument to the gods of dollars and cents. Intent on the scramble for the means of living, you saw here, in the decorations, the efforts of a departed architect to suggest the quality of a life lived.

Therefore I lingered, communing, perhaps, with Henry Quatre, and taking idle note of a baby who played in a pool of warm sunshine and pulled at the cane of a possible grandfather. I noted them subconsciously, a part of the picture—and then, for no apparent reason, my eyes turned toward the opening doors at the end of the corridor.

She was a rather tall girl who entered: I think her slenderness lent that impression. She brought a breath of mignonettes with her, a faint breath laden with forgotten memories. Her attire bespoke good taste, refinement; her curves, youth; her carriage, a possible vibrancy, the vibrancy of a character tempered by serious thought. Through the heavy veil I caught an impression of sadness in the deep, liquid eyes. I have seen the same suggested light deep back in the eyes of a mother for whom time has softened the loss of a child.

It was that, I suppose, which made my eyes follow her. That suggestion of mature sadness was not in keeping with the face of one so young. She could not have been past twenty-three. That fresh-cheeked face, thoughtful though it was, had relieving piquant attributes; the red lips were designed for laughter, for responsive expression, for the softening touch of happiness.

She paused a short distance down the lobby, and searched the room with a nervous, penetrating glance. Then,



evidently failing to find what she sought, she drew a quick breath, and moved to a seat in the corner, facing the door she had entered.

With each creak of the swinging doors, she tautened—then relaxed, in evident disappointment. Though she controlled herself as one who has a horror of being unnecessarily conspicuous, she made her state of mind patent by her very air of repression. Dejection was not paramount; yet the struggle between the erect back and the drooping shoulders could not escape an observant eye.

A traveling man bustled in; an old lady wearing a poke bonnet; a Persian peddler bedecked with his colored wares; a family group with anxious mother, fretful baby, resigned but nearly rebellious nurse and important father. I had noted it was none of these when—he came.

I knew at once. I could not but know, seeing the girl. She looked at him, and looked—and then away, staring straight in front of her—and waiting.

As for the man, he looked at her only once. His face grew somewhat whiter as he did so. He was a tall youth, clean-lined, with square, erect shoulders; he stepped firmly, with the reliant tread of an athlete; all the lines of his face denoted firmness, poise, cleanliness.

Yet on this young face, too, there lay the haunting marks of thought beyond his years. His was the carriage of a West Pointer of twenty-five; but he was dressed in black. He was a priest.

Save for that one tremor, he walked direct to the ticket window. There was a bag—a new yellow bag—in his hand. He placed this on the floor. He purchased a long green ticket. Placing this in an envelope, he picked up the bag, moved to the Pullman window, purchased some reservations there and turned back toward the corner.

With one glance he swept the room; then he walked straight to the girl.

There was no outcry from her, no melodrama, no mawkishness. Yet I saw them look at one another. It is good to see with your own eyes that such a thing is possible between men and women of this human race. There were a few murmured words which I did not catch, nor *want* to catch; in the next breath he handed her the envelope, placed the bag beside her, and, suddenly, turned away. He went out, without looking back once, the way he came.

I keep seeing his face. . . .

It was not for me to look at the girl just then. But I stayed—as she did. And in five, ten, perhaps fifteen minutes, the man returned.

This time he was not alone. He was accompanied by many older men whose heavy steps resounded on the tiles. All of them, save one, were priests. Cold, bleak, rocklike, their austere faces were lit by that cheerless sun of dogmatic righteousness. I had no means of knowing, yet I thought at once of a guard I had once seen taking a condemned man to the death chamber. They walked ahead and behind of the youth, who was accompanied by the one elderly man not in ecclesiastical garb. He resembled the young priest very much. To me he suggested the opulent manufacturer who contributes means to the faith.

They walked straight out to the train-shed, disappearing down the steps. The youth seemed to hold his head rigid as he passed the girl. But the girl's eyes had followed him. . . .

And yet I lingered. I heard a train rush into the shed—no doubt *their* train—but the girl stayed. Ten minutes went by—twenty—and another train was called. This time the girl rose. When she walked past me toward the shed, with the new bag in her hand, I saw that beneath the veil which is deeper than relieving tears.

And I watched her go—and I wondered.



**W**HEN a women says, "I want your frank opinion," it is time to think up some new ones.



# UPSTAIRS

By R. W. Sneddon

HE noted before he ascended the stone steps that the only light visible in the bedroom upstairs was such as might be given by a faint night light. He opened the door softly and marveled at the steadiness of his hand.

It seemed to him to be only a few minutes since he had heard his doctor say: "A little less brain work and a little more outdoor exercise every day, Brome, will soon put that shaky hand right." He had a sudden fancy as to what his wife would say if he told her of his visit to the doctor. There was little enough sympathy between them. If there was any, it was on his side, and he had no wish to subject himself to that quiet, effective voice of hers with the bite of sarcasm in it: "You're always fancying things, Walter." If that was all, fancy—but he knew himself that he was no weakening and that any complaints he had to make were well founded. He laughed softly to himself with a taste of bitterness on his lips.

As he stopped before the long mirror which hung in the hall he glanced at himself quickly. Tall, slender, a pale face, his mouth hidden by a fair mustache, a sharply pointed chin. He used to stroke it meditatively and wonder if its prominence gave the lie to the superstition which connected it with strength of character. He removed his hat and listened attentively. The noise from upstairs was the insistent running of water in the bathroom, and he felt peevishly annoyed at the neglect of the person responsible.

The library door was open. The log fire still glowed and he entered the room quietly, laid his hat on the table and sat

down. He felt too tired to remove his overcoat. He thought half ruefully of his crushed coattails. It seemed ludicrous to him that he should think of such a trifle when his mind was so full of other things. The night had been cold, and his feet crept out to the fire as he sat in the deep chair. He drew off his gloves and noted with a prick of chagrin that there was a hole at the thumb-joining of one of them. He wondered casually if it had been seen, and felt that he had been careless in the purchase.

His wife—if she had seen it she would have made some obvious remark. Ah, those obvious remarks! How they jarred upon him! The tiny rippled expression of his own ideas, which he thought too useless to utter. And yet she was not unintelligent. She kept her intelligence for visitors—for anyone whom he chose to bring home for dinner, for her own friends who chattered to her over the teacups. She was profligate of her brain then. But when the curtain rang down and the lights went out, she became petty, small, a creature of pettish querulousness and eternal whimperings—her nerves—her domestic worries—her little insincere assiduities. He hated the nakedness of her soul. It was repulsive to him.

She always wanted to be out. There was no consideration for his tired evenings, for his desire to be alone with his own thoughts among his books. Was there no inner chamber where he might be with himself? She would steal in with exaggerated soft-footedness and ask in a whisper if he was too busy to go out—if he would rather wait in—wasn't he growing too old-foggyish



among his horrid books—wouldn't he come out for once; it wasn't far—the company would do him good—she didn't like to go out by herself; it excited comment. Of course if he liked her to be talked about— She knew he didn't. She was only teasing. But still—and then purring over him when they went out, the wrangling, affectionate, clammy affection of it all. A cat, ah, she modeled herself well, sleek, well groomed, purring—always with the claw concealed—and fawning. Would he ever understand her? Would—

Upstairs there was a sudden sharp sound. Something hard had fallen to the floor with a metallic ring.

He started and sat still, holding his breath. Something had fallen upstairs, a candlestick—a hairbrush. His wife was not in bed. He sat back in his chair, his senses wide awake, his mind working normally.

There was the creak of a board, a stealthy footstep, one single footstep as if the person upstairs had stopped to listen, and then the sound of someone who walked heavily across the floor. All at once his heart gave a plunge within his breast and his blood began to race.

Who walked so heavily upstairs? It was not his wife. It was some unknown one who was there—for what purpose? He hastily ran over in his mind who—what—was this person. Why was he here? Suddenly he remembered that two weeks ago there had been a burglary in a house but ten doors off—that the burglar had not been traced. What if at this moment there was a burglar in his house? Someone who was holding his breath as he listened upstairs, wondering whether he was quite alone in the silent house. His leg began to feel cramped, and he moved it with infinite patience to an easier position.

He could picture the burglar standing perfectly still—with his eyes straining into the darkness, his eardrums humming painfully in the effort to catch the slightest sound from the silent hall below, listening to—

God, he had almost forgotten her, his wife! What was she doing? Was it

something else, the shame of which he dare not face? He clenched his fists tight. His hands trembled more than they had ever done. And something choked in his throat. A stray tear trickled from his eyelid. It was the first for many a year. He put up his hand hastily to wipe it away, and let it fall again listlessly. Her lover. Who? Who? Who? His brain seemed to be able to say nothing but that. He was too stunned to think—too stunned to move—too dead to sensation to feel resentment, nothing but a dull questioning. Suddenly his head cleared. He could think now. She had tired of him. It was natural. He was no longer himself. He must have been an encumbrance. He had become a dullard—that dullest of dull things, a dullard of the library, blind to life, blind to love. He might have noticed that she was drifting away from him. The thread of her mooring cord had worn thin. If only there had been a child! There was no child; the pity of it, the pity of it! The nursery upstairs stood empty—the mausoleum of their early hopes. Why had there been none?

He blamed her—her with her pettinesses—her sugared jealousies of other women—her cruel word caricatures of her friends, of his friends. Her purring over him; her feigned anxiety as to his health; her doubting ear given to his illnesses; her careless silencing of his thoughts: he was ill, seriously ill, and she had laughed him to scorn, had—Oh, she was heartless, and he—it was only natural—he despised her, hated her, *hated* her! He felt himself soar high above her meannesses. To be rid of her, to feel himself free—free to come and go—to do as he wanted—to be alone. Her companionship was hateful. Why had he done this thing? His friends, her friends had brought them together—had almost driven him to marry her. At first the novelty had kept at bay the truth he was now discovering. He wanted to be rid of her. How? But how? He was no murderer. Divorce? He could prove nothing. She would cling to him for her good name.



The man upstairs—the lover. What were his thoughts? What were his wife's thoughts? Was there any thought of him? He had left her before dinner to dine out with his publisher at his club. They had dined, he sparingly, and smoked. Then they had met Brokden, the success of whose new play had inspired him to a new plot into the confidence of which he had led them. Discussion had followed till he had realized the lateness of the hour. And during that time thoughts of his wife and his honor had passed from him. It is on such trivialities as the chance meeting with a friend that honor—and wife—are lost.

A heavy footstep crossed the floor upstairs. Brome started in his chair and rose unsteadily to his feet. His chair, sliding back upon the polished floor, grated uneasily. The noise upstairs stopped so sharply that one might have imagined a foot about to step, held up-lifted in the air—the agonized expression of the listener—the stealthy setting of the toe of the uplifted foot on the floor, then the painful bending till the heel was flat with it—the strain on the knee, and above all the beat, beat, of the heart as the pent-up breath leapt out. Then the slow shifting from one foot to the other—the slow intake of the breath—the hand on the wall the better to steady himself. His wife, clutching her mouth lest she should cry out, with her clenched hand, the blue veins showing at the knuckles, her screwed-up eyes staring into the silence; and both waiting, despising each other.

Downstairs he stood with one hand on the mantel shelf, the other on his heart. It seemed to be pounding the life out of him, driving his spirit to the exit of his mouth where the portals of his knit teeth held it a close prisoner. Suddenly with a swing he dropped his hand, walked to the table, seized his hat, passed through the door of the library, and without a backward glance opened the front door, closed it behind him, and walked down the steps swiftly.

Upstairs within, at the top of the landing, where the stairs turned, a black mass separated itself from the prevailing

darkness. Something alive was moving there. One might have heard a sigh of relief and the shuffle of a foot.

He walked he knew not where. He only knew that the night was cold. The snow had fallen fast while he was indoors. How long he had been inside he had no idea—hours and hours it seemed. All he desired was to be away and to walk—to feel that he was outside the circle of intrigue and that he himself was clean. And yet was he? Was he in any way responsible for it? Had he been anything but kind? True, sometimes he had been ruffled, but it had never shown. He kept too tight a rein on his emotions for that. Perhaps, if he had said all he thought, if he had been franker, if there had been more real communion between them, if there had not been the eternal wariness—the constant fear that the other would spy upon some secret thought sacred to the thinker alone! It was so petty, the whole thing. They had taken each other as husband and wife. Which of them had failed to make allowance for the other, the man of forty or the wife of twenty-five? He was no child. She was no child. Yet she was younger by fifteen years. Fifteen years—he had never realized the disparity in their ages. Yet was it not true that in knowledge of the world he was the younger, the simpler, the more childish?

The jarring note of a clock overhead drew him up sharply. Two o'clock. The snow was still falling. His coat was heavy with it. His feet felt the clutch of the snow. Almost insensibly, as his body began to chill, he began to feel kindlier toward her. Perhaps his judgment had been too harsh. He was not for her world, blind dreamer. He had thought too much of his work. Books—books. After all, what were they to him? What comfort had they brought to him? Often as he sat in his library he had felt that he must cry out for the very loneliness of him, for the sound of a voice, the sight of someone, the companionship of someone he knew. And then when she had come in he had lost all desire; he had shown himself cold, distraught, pretending to write, answering



her inquiries in snapping monosyllables, raising his head only from his desk to watch her go.

Could he do without her? Was it not his fault? After all, her solicitude must have been real enough, in spite of her two moods of indifference and excessive attention. He began to picture a house without her. Though she was not beautiful, she was charming. She had distinction. That little ripple of hair she arranged over her ear so cunningly; the dimple just kissing her mouth; her eyes, her enigmatic eyes with their long eyelashes; the sleek hollow of her shoulders when she wore evening dress; her slender, nervous fingers; the delicate coolness of the hand she laid upon his brow; the little catlike way she placed her toes on the ground when she walked; the color and the daintiness of her dresses; her slim feet; the feeling of intimacy she gave you hearing her speak; the seeking for your admiration. And to lose it all because he had imagined something which existed only in his own brain. Those words of coldness which escaped her now and again were but an echo of his own. He could not lose her. He loved her. Was it too late to arrange—to send her lover away—to forgive her and to be forgiven? They would go traveling. It would do them both good.

He wheeled round and commenced to retrace his steps. What reason had he for even suggesting the possibility of a lover?

Because he had heard something fall upstairs in his wife's bedroom. Because he had come back from discussing a problem play. Because he had given himself up foolishly to brooding on his doctor's advice. Because he had been in a bad temper—a whimsical state of mental depression. He whistled as he walked in the snow, slipping and sliding. The snow was beginning to harden on

the pavement, and he almost fell once or twice.

Suddenly without warning there came upon the stage of his thoughts the sinister apparition of a stealthy, silent, breathing figure swiftly turning out drawer after drawer, emptying the contents pellmell on the floor in search of his wife's jewels; his wife sitting up in bed, her hair about her shoulders, her cheeks blanched, her eyes narrow with fear, her slender hands strangled in a fold of the quilt—the pink quilt which lay upon the bed; a scream—the savage snarl of the intruder—the slow approach to the bedside.

He broke into a run. His blood was pounding through his whole being. He cursed himself as he ran. His hat toppled off and he ran on bareheaded, his stick held fast, stumbling and panting till he came to his own doorsteps. He stopped. A set of strange footsteps in the snow. He recognized that. They were larger than his own. The door stood slightly open.

The hall was pitch black. Someone had extinguished the light. The library fire through the open door flickered a shadow on the wall and the whole house seemed full of a silence terrible and menacing. His feet scarcely seemed to touch the steps as he rushed upstairs. The door of the bedroom was ajar. He hesitated. Then he pushed it softly open. The night light burned dimly. The bed was shrouded in gloom. Nothing seemed disturbed. Suddenly something strange about the quilt disquieted him. Raising the night light, he crossed to the bed, and bending over, drew down the quilt slowly. It felt moist and clammy to his touch. And as he saw what lay hidden there, his legs seemed to fall away from him, and he sank in a huddled heap by the bed where the murdered woman lay.



**H**EROES are just ordinary men, plus initiative and minus discretion.



# THE GREATER FOOL

By Achmed Abdullah

“I WILL tell you the story of the woman and of the greater fool,” said Ibrahim.

The American interrupted rather brusquely:

“If it’s one of your usual stories concerning women, the less said about it the better.”

Ibrahim looked at him gravely and replied:

“No, this is indeed a strange story, and not a story about love and woman. Tell me, is there anything strange about love and woman? They are but everyday affairs; for what woman cannot capture the heart of the silly thing called man? Who is the man who is proof against the blossom-tipped shafts and the flowery bow? Love is not only blind, but also most deaf. For it is true that a camel and a she-donkey fell in love, and the ass, looking up at the camel, said tenderly: ‘Allah, what a fine, straight noble nose!’ And the camel, hearing the voice of the she-donkey, exclaimed: ‘Allah, what a sweet musical voice!’ Is it not also said that there lives a pig-faced female in Samarkand who has two lovers? . . . No, my friend, this is not a story of love, but a strange story—with a moral. Listen and judge.

“Madhusadan the Hindoo—he was the descendant of an old Parohita family, yet a dog of an unbeliever, cursed be the father of his grandfather!—Madhusadan and I were passing through a bazaar in Benares when a girl saluted us with a smiling salaam. Madhusadan, being a shameless Hindoo pig, was for following the girl, claiming that she had saluted him, while I knew that it was myself at whom she had

meant to smile. But he would not be convinced, and so we both ran after her and asked her to resolve our doubt. She looked at us through half-closed eyelids and said: ‘I saluted the greater fool of you two.’ And so the Hindoo and I, being as clay on the wheel of two black eyes, tried to claim superiority over each other in folly and stupidity—and Madhusadan said: ‘Know then, O dream of bliss—ah, for thy sake—to save one of thy precious eyelashes—I would slaughter a cow—that one unforgivable sin!’

“But I interrupted him rudely, telling him to stick to the point, and he continued: ‘Know then that when I reached the ripe age of thirteen I married the daughter of the learned Brahman Chandratta, a pretty little dove with hair like the black cloud of autumn which, heavy with rain, sweeps the thirsty earth, and with a soft brown skin which mocked the pale beauty of the waxen-flowered jasmine. And on the eve of the marriage feast my father said to me: ‘Beware, O my son, how thou behavest in the house of the learned Chandratta. Thou art thirteen years of age; thou hast indeed reached man’s estate; and in another year, with the help of the great God Kamadeva, thou shalt be a father thyself. So beware, and remember that it is the habit of ill-bred and low caste sweepers to eat or drink much in the house of a father-in-law, or even to show that thou art hungry. Remember also that he who shows ill-breeding in the house of his father-in-law on the night of the marriage feast shall live the life of an insect in his next fourteen lives.’”



"I promised to follow his advice, and then I adorned myself as becomes a man, a Brahman and a gentleman: I carefully shaved off the few hairs which darkened my chin; I pulled at my sprouting moustachios till my nostrils tickled and itched; I drew broad lines of antimony down my eyelids; I heightened the color of my lips by chewing betel; I gave a deeper and more brilliant hue to the caste mark on my forehead; I stained the tips of my fingers with henna; I took three hours to bind a new pink turban; I arranged well the folds of my waistband, and I perfumed my body from my head to my toes. And that night, when brown shadows dulled the face of the earth and stars spangled the pale heavens, I sallied forth as a conqueror to the house of the learned Chandratta, where I found that great preparations had been made to receive me. I was met by Jayashri herself, my little bride. Before me she placed pomegranates, the fruits of love, in richly carved bowls, exquisite confections compounded of rose leaves, sugar and spices, and fifteen nicely cooked dishes flavored with honey and assafoetida—and my mouth watered, hunger gnawed at my bones, and I came near swallowing my tongue with the desire of it.

"But I remembered my father's advice and refused all food, fasting until midnight. And then, when I was alone in my sleeping room, and everybody in the house was resting, my hunger got the best of me, and I crept quietly downstairs and groped my way into the kitchen. But I found nothing except some eggs, and taking three or four of them, I ran back. But I was in too great a hurry; I stumbled and fell directly in front of my bedchamber with a great clattering noise. I heard

excited voices and the sounds of people stirring. So I quickly entered my room, and finding no place to hide the eggs, and wishing to escape detection, I thrust them into my mouth. And, by Kama, my face looked as swollen as if a black bramra had bitten me. The people rushed into my room and asked me if I had heard the noise, if I knew what had happened. But I did not reply, fearing that I should disclose the eggs which were hidden in my mouth. So they asked me again and shook me to see if I was asleep, but I did not answer, and they were frightened and brought lamps—and then they saw how terribly my face was swollen.

"Quickly they sent for the doctor. He came and touched my face and said that an operation would have to be performed at once to save my life. He took a sharp knife and made deep incisions in both my cheeks, breaking the eggs with the point of his instrument, and when the yolk and the white of the eggs came through the wounds, he exclaimed triumphantly: "Behold what an amount of putrid matter there was in his cheeks"—and he bandaged my face and put me on a strict diet for many a hungry day."

"Thus finished the Hindoo's tale, and he looked at the girl and added: "Tell me, heart of three roses, was there ever a greater fool than I?"

"And I said:

"Light of my unworthy eyes, two moons ago I was engaged in a certain risky enterprise beyond the border, and I did not know what to do. So I asked the advice of the mother of my sons—"

"And the girl interrupted me, saying: "Tis thee to whom I salaamed. For assuredly thou art the greater fool."



LIVES of great men all remind us that they had a cinch sublime,  
For they didn't have to tango night and day to mad ragtime.



# THE SCIENCE OF FOUR-FLUSHING

By Owen Hatteras

**F**OUR-FLUSHING is the art of inviting Hugo Blatz in to have a drink with you and, when the bartender tosses the check on the bar, grabbing for it coincidentally with Hugo (who has had his drink and has impatiently been waiting for you to take the check), pretending to pull it viciously out of Hugo's hand and during the struggle subtly tearing the check in half, leaving the half with the thirty-cent charge on it in Hugo's hand.

Four-flushing is also the art of knowing two Oscar Wilde epigrams and, biding your time, springing them at opportune and pithy points in the conversation, thereby achieving a reputation for being great at repartee and a widely read man. Four-flushing, to serialize the definition, is likewise the art of eating lunch near the window at a good restaurant every third Saturday and calling down the headwaiter for slovenly service (so the girls at the next table can hear you) because your table waiter just bumped against your chair a little. It is the art of simultaneously wearing a fancy vest and holes in your socks; the art of pretending in the theater that you know the difference between a coloratura soprano and a mezzo-soprano and using the word "arpeggio" in your remarks; the art of wearing a heavy black ribbon on your eyeglasses to help cure your astigmatism; the art of always referring to Miss Ethel Barrymore as Ethel; the art of telling people, when a certain prominent man's name comes up, "Oh, yes, he was in my class at college"; and the art of not carrying an umbrella on rainy days.

Four-flushing is a science; at least, it is a science as certain sections of the

populations of our large commonwealths practise it. It is, too, a fascinating and complex science for purposes of study. I have given fifteen long years to the investigation of it in its various and diverse phases as indulged in by my fellow American citizens and I am still in the First Reader. It derives its name, as you know, from the fellow in a poker game who mysteriously puts his features into a position that looks more or less like a composite picture of Bismarck, Napoleon, Gladstone and Herbert Spencer, makes all the boys think he has a hand that contains at least five aces and, when the showdown comes, sort of holds back his hand in a climacteric, third-act-big-scene way until all the others are face up on the green cloth and then, with the remark, "They're all pink, fellas," shows four cards with florid complexions and the fifth card with black eyes. The word "four-flushing," however, has become so popular in the big outside world that it has now been deserted entirely by card players, who have substituted for it the compound word, "Aw-stop-kidding-and-get-down-to-business."

Many men in this country have earned great big elegant reputations in all kinds of lines just by four-flushing and getting away with it. This is what differentiates a plain, ordinary four-flusher from a scientific one. The man who has his front tooth filled with gold and all the back ones that can't be seen filled with amalgam is a plain, ordinary flour-flusher, and is known for such by his fellows. The scientific and successful practitioner knows better than this. He is shrewd, astute and clever; a savant, a philosopher, a sage. He has *all* his bad



teeth filled with gold, front and back and side—and then he doesn't pay the dentist. In this way he persuades everybody in the world—with one little lonely, insignificant exception—to think he has money in the bank and that he always gets the best of everything. He is wise enough to know that the one little lonely, insignificant exception doesn't count, because nobody ever pays any attention to a dentist, except to hate him. To really get away with it—which means never to be suspected—one must adapt to the case Aaron Burr's celebrated remark to the effect that a lie well told is as good as the truth. Four-flushing must analogously be carried off in a high-handed, grandiose and lordly manner. It must have the ring of intrinsic authenticity to it.

For instance, let's take the question of clothes. The sartorial four-flusher is an animal as common on the streets as torn-up pavements. He eats at some rude rotisserie, lives in some meager hole and always appears in public in a fur overcoat. The fur overcoat is one of those Michigan cat things, with a hemp collar dyed black to give an effect of Persian lamb, that can be bought at the continuous performances called extraordinary sales for about twenty-two dollars. Accompany this creation with a cane (cost ninety-eight cents)—a cane is the most high-sounding thing in looks in all the world—and a pair of yellow chamois gloves (cost one dollar) and the four-flusher is ready with the implements of war.

But, unless he be a scientific worker, zip will go every inch of the royal power of his kingly accoutrements! He realizes this and acts accordingly. With a quarter in his pocket and his poor old mother starving to death out in Saint Joe, Mo., he saunters forth, imperiously brushing many newsboys from his path and waving off street beggars with distressed mien. He usually scowls, too, to make it seem he is so annoyed with everything. Down the Avenue he jauntily strolls, his cane tucked under his arm in modish swaggerness, his head high in air. He looks neither to the right nor left of him, and he knows

that the little shopgirls in passing are all taking a guess as to whether he is Reggie Vanderbilt or A. J. Drexel-Biddle. He plays the fur overcoat to the limit. In regal manner, he walks through several of the fashionable hotels. This doesn't cost anything, but somehow or other it always looks grand. Maybe he also has himself paged. Many a man has gained a reputation for being a man-about-town by wearing a fur overcoat, sitting in Peacock Alley from five to six every afternoon and getting a bellboy to go through the hotel corridors and the palm room shouting out his name. It's the greatest advertising stunt in the world and it costs only a dime.

However, to return to our friend. While strolling through one of the hotels, whom does he see but old Henry Woggle? "Stay and have dinner with me," urges Hen. "I'd like to ever so much, old man," replies our friend, as if he were doing Hen a great favor, "but the fact is I have three invitations already. Mrs. Blinks expects me to dine with her; Algie Clinks is giving a little dinner to some of the Follies girls and I promised him to help out; and Miss Rinks has asked me up to her house. I've just been trying to decide which invitation I'd accept." Henry Woggle has now made up his mind that our friend is one Important Guy, and if there is one thing above all others that human beings like to do it is to throw away their hard-earned money buying food and drink for Important Guys! So Hen urges, cajoles, implores our friend "to break his dates" (which exist only in the imagination), and our friend, after much hesitation and protesting and a couple of Woggle's cocktails, finally agrees to let Woggle spend.

During the dinner, our friend glances at his watch several times and, excusing himself in order "to telephone" (ah, the mystery and delightful lure of those sly calls in Woggle's imagination!), makes frequent trips to the telephone booth in order to ask the operator what time it is or something equally devilish and inexpensive. And when the dinner is over, our friend tosses (never *hands*) his



solitary quarter elegantly and with a fine flourish to the hat-and-coat-check boy, thereby giving old Hank Woggle the indelible impression that he has just had the great privilege of buying a meal for one of the city's real things. "Must say good night now, Woggle," explains our friend; "I've got to be at my club at eight thirty and then catch the last act of 'The Belle of Boshville.' You must dine with me some night." And off he dashes—to his dingy, dinky room with its broken gas jet, its torn flowered wallpaper, its cracked china washbowl and unwashed window looking out upon a series of bursting garbage cans, there to read a magazine nine months old until he falls asleep to dream of himself telling Mrs. Belmont what kind of cotillion favors she ought to get, assuring Mrs. Fish that Newport isn't what it used to be, and so on—until it is time to don the fur overcoat and yellow gloves and cane for another day's brave campaign.

The mental four-flusher is as common a spectacle as the sartorial specimen, the latter being a person who may aptly be defined in brief as the sort of man who waits in a tailor shop while his only pair of trousers is being creased and employs himself during the process by ostentatiously reading the financial page of the tailor's morning newspaper. The mental four-flusher reads the book reviews in the papers and subsequently talks as if he had read the books themselves. His conversations are made up largely of quotations with the quotation marks very often carefully omitted. He usually has in one way or another contracted eight or ten facts about art, music, literature and so forth, which are all that he knows about the particular subject or work or craft in question, but which, suavely etched into a conversation or a letter or an opinion in general, give to the second person an impression of deep supplementary knowledge reposing underneath. I know one man who, by cleverly manipulating his end of a conversation, has secured for himself the reputation of a scholar on the strength of six and only six observations—practically the sum total of his

erudition. The six points and quotations, which he is careful to spring on his listener at opportune points, are as follows—memorize them, work them aptly and adroitly into your conversation, and you, like this man, will be hailed as a wise one:

I. "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught."  
—OSCAR WILDE.

II. "The ways of the world are devious."  
—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

III. Have you ever read Nietzsche's "Also Sprach Zarathustra"? It's a great piece of work!

IV. Bernard Shaw is indeed a very clever chap, but I don't think he's sincere.

V. "To be or not to be—that is the question."  
—SHAKESPEARE.

VI. Do you prefer Rembrandt to Rubens?

One of the most fertile fields in which to practise this noble art is oratory—political, after-dinner or barroom. Oratory—which in the vulgate is known as making a speech—is the science of describing the snowy cotton fields of fair Virginia in the soft purple twilight of a balmy, perfumed Southern evening and making your audience cry, when the topic of your speech is really "The Beneficent Effects of Free Trade in the Azores." Many an orator has gained a fine reputation as a political economist by describing the rock-bound coast of Maine and the everglades of Florida, and many another orator has achieved fame as the president of the Chamber of Commerce and an authority on the labor question by painting a beautiful and impressive word picture of the majestic expanse of the rolling prairies of Nebraska. After-dinner speakers galore have likewise got their photographs on the front page as wits by being reminded of something Mark Twain once said and, more often, by passing off as original something George Ade used in his daily column in a Chicago newspaper sixteen years ago. The four-flusher is, indeed, an active soul on the rostrum and at the speakers' table. This is another reason for the spread of Socialism, for more stringent copyright laws, for the desirability of a high school education for the masses and for the demitasse.



Four-flushing has become a serious and cankerous vice in many fields of enterprise. It is the besetting sin of the overly pretentious populi of too-quickly-growing America. There are hundreds of American actors who four-flush an unpractised, unschooled and backyard method of pronouncing the English language into something with the surface semblance of diction refinement by pronouncing "been" as if it were spelled "bean," "again" as if it were spelled "agayne" and "secretary" as if it were spelled "secretry." There are any number of Americans who, plying as amateurs the trade of letters, seek to four-flush themselves into a writing style by calling everybody names and thereby believing themselves to be American George Bernard Shaws; who seek to four-flush themselves into short story writers by putting an extravagant twist into the last paragraph of their fiction and thereby becoming heirs to the mantle of O. Henry; and who seek to four-flush themselves into Rudyard Kiplings by writing verse in which unparlor physiological terms and the word "hell" are as thick as hairs under a barber's chair.

There is the four-flusher who never had a dollar to invest in his life who rushes to a stock ticker whenever and wherever he gets a chance and grabs the tape in a feverish way as if he had a fortune in Steel at stake. There is another who rides in open taxicabs so people can see him, when his orphan sister walked all the way downtown that very same morning so that she could save a nickel in order to help buy him tenderloin steak next Tuesday instead of the rump steak she had been cooking for him for the last two weeks on account of the high cost of living and terrible butcher charges. There is the girl who makes her mother scrimp and save and plan and scheme and wash dishes and windows and dust the parlor herself so that she, the daughter, won't get red hands, and so that she can sit at the window in a new dress (that cost mother watery eyes and corned beef and cabbage six times a week), read Elinor Glyn and look as much like a lady as

possible when her beau comes. There is the girl who makes her tired old father keep on his shoes in the evening, after he has been chasing insurance all day long, just so a proper impression may be made on Percival Van Dresser when he calls on her that night.

There is the four-flushing young man at college who sits around the rathskeller with his brothers of the O Phi Phi society buying drinks ahead of his turn and doing the tenor for "We're All Good Fellows, Boys," when his parents have had to take a cheaper flat just so he could have the money to study higher mathematics and Assyrian history. There is the young man who never went to college who wears a Yale hatband and a fifty-cent scarfpin showing a skull and crossbones (with almost-ruby eyes in the skull) pinned very mysteriously in the far corner of his vest, who yells "Come on, you Yales!" when he goes to a football game and who then, when everybody nearby turns to look at him with a grin, thinks he is being approved of. And we must not overlook the four-flusher who believes he is a purist in tongue and script just because he never, under any circumstances, at any time, ends a sentence with a preposition. Finley Peter Dunne, incidentally, not long ago told me that, above all other four-flushers, he despised most acutely the erudite soul who preached that a perfect style insisted that an infinitive should never be split. But enough of the grammatical side of our national sport. Let us march ahead.

There is the fellow who keeps you waiting in his outside office for twenty minutes while he is filing his finger nails just to make you think he's very busy and important. There is the man who, when you go to talk business with him, makes you sit in a chair with your eyes facing the brilliant, blinding sun (*his* back being turned to it) so that he may profit by your discomfort. This species of four-flusher is most often a shyster lawyer or a man who never had more than twenty dollars in the bank at one time and whom all women and dogs avoid. There is the chap who carries a tennis racket in public places just to



prove he's an athlete, and the fellow who, feeling himself getting the worst of it in an argument, abruptly turns his back on you in a superior manner and walks away, or perhaps remarks: "I do not care to discuss the matter further with you." There is the four-flusher who smokes five-cent cigars that are made up to look like fancy-tails and who, before anyone can get a squint at the betraying cigar band, quickly slips it off and tucks it into his pocket with the explanatory comment: "I know a

youngster who's saving them." There is the one who has a whole pile of money hoarded up somewhere and complains all the time about being broke. There is the one who *is* broke and who protests all the time: "I don't see why everybody's complaining. Business was never better." There is the one who—

But enough! This is a magazine article, not an encyclopedia. And the first rule of any well regulated, well behaved magazine article is that it should not hurt its readers' feelings.



## SKY BATTLE

By Harry Kemp

THE hosts of rain rush into war tonight;  
 Its cavalry charges, mounted on the wind,  
 Its far artillery rolls and roars, behind,  
 Before, on every side—from depth to height,  
 The sky is all confusion, conflict, flight,  
 And close pursuit, like madness in the mind.  
 The arrows of the lightning, golden-twined,  
 Now here, now there, shoot in sky-branching flight.

But would all battles were as is the rain's,  
 Which wakes to life, nor strews the field with dead—  
 Covering blue-topped hills, fresh groves, wide plains  
 With springing hosts of flowers and grass instead,  
 While every drop that greets the morning's eyes  
 Shines like a jewel lost from paradise.



## THE PHILOSOPHER IN THE STREET

By Richard R. Newbold

DEMOCRACY—A condition in which all men have the same amount of brains.

Dyspepsia ought to be as disgraceful as delirium tremens.

College—A place where people are prepared to be educated.

Most men are fools—otherwise why public funerals?



## THREE TELEGRAMS

By May Mangam

**A**BOVE the cliffs, on a balcony of a house overlooking the ocean, she stood, a telegram in her hand. Her face was aglow and her eyes alight.

For years she had waited for this news, while he sailed his ship, at the orders of the government, from port to port. Here at last was the long-looked-for message: "Ordered for land duty. Can we be married at once?"

In a tiny bungalow they made their home. The evenings were spent on the vine-covered porch, where the moon cast long shadows and the roses and oleanders seemed to pay tribute with their subtle perfume to these lovers who had waited so long that they knew and appreciated the happiness that had come to them.

The night was hot. They had been having a merry time with their friends in the little home. The last guest had gone. But it was too beautiful a night to go indoors, so they lingered a while in Arcady; there was no sound to be heard except the insects singing their nightly song, and the moon was the only witness. Suddenly there was a crunching sound on the gravel, and an orderly approached with a telegram. Tearing open the envelope with quick, nervous fingers, they read: "War declared. Report for duty at once."

Such a few words, and yet an end to all their joy. Stern duty staring them in the face, there was no time for partings. Only a hasty good-bye, a wave of the hand, and the ship had passed from sight. It was as if a cyclone had suddenly demolished their hopes and plans, for as she packed up her belongings and closed the home she was obsessed with a premonition of evil that she could not shake off.

Then came the days of anxious waiting; the longing for news, yet the dread of it. The jangling of the doorbell made her tremble. She scanned the newspapers for reports, and yet, with all her dread and foreboding, she was unprepared when the maid entered with the telegram addressed to her. With trembling hands she tore open the envelope and read the message. Her husband had been killed in battle.

There was nothing she could ask except that they bring him back on his own ship. And that was all that life had to offer her of happiness. Just those few weeks together and now this fatal slip of yellow paper.

The sun had set. There was a gray mist over land and sea. Wrapped in a long black coat, the little widow stood on the balcony. Never had she lost sight of the sea, searching always for the ship that was bringing back all that was dear to her. Suddenly from out the mist, slowly, majestically, came a big warship with flags at halfmast. With splendor and every military honor, they escorted him to his last resting place. The band from his ship played the dirge. Eulogies were pronounced over one who had given his life for his country. But for her was only the widowhood and desolation—her memories—and the dream of happiness which began and ended with a telegram.



# THE INCALCULABLE ELEMENT

By Cluny Gwynne

WITH a little curse yet with a little smile the Governor laid her card among the litter on the handsome desk with which a grateful people had provided him. Heaven knew, he did not want to see her now!

Through the shaded western windows some oblique rays of the setting sun streamed in and relieved momentarily the heavy massiveness of the room, almost oppressive with the gathered dignity of a commonwealth. One shaft, thin as a sword and sharp as a flame, fell across the half-finished letter to Dorothy Rodmore he had been writing in the scattered intervals of his leisure, and the sharp, thin shaft was a symbol of all the burning things in his heart. Just beyond the awning was a blinding patch of sunlight, a visible, elite invitation to come out of doors and be young again, and, behind their strong glasses, the Governor's weak eyes wandered eagerly to it. Quite irresistibly, all the long afternoon, he had felt the allure of this glorious day of early spring calling subtly but clearly to his vanishing youth, and now, going impatiently to the window, he rested his watery eyes on the glowing grasses of the Capitol grounds. He was rather young, this Junius Challoner, and spring was still a meaningful matter for him. So he stood there many moments, thinking of many things—of Dorothy Rodmore and phrases he had been writing her; of remembered hours and happy days to be. Yet, all the while his active mind was seeking some subterfuge, some possible pretext for avoiding this interview with the woman in the anteroom. There were, of course, many evasions not far to seek, but not one of them could he consider wholly

honest. And as he was young, severely truthful and a reform governor not long in politics, he did not choose simply to lie about it.

He came back at last to the handsome desk, and there staring up at him from his half-finished letter was her unforgettable name—"Miss Elizabeth Taverner." He looked to the closed door, and there staring quizzically down upon him was the wondering old doorkeeper—an up-State politician, human and no servant, who carried three townships in his pocket.

"There is no one else, Iden?" The Governor asked it a little wearily, picking up her card.

"The lady is the last one, sir," and the old doorkeeper's eyes never left his face.

But the Governor continued to toy with her card, turning it over countless times in his thin fingers. He knew, of course, the mission she had come upon—even interested old Iden knew as much. But only the Governor himself knew precisely how fruitless that mission was to be. He might not grant the one thing she would ask of him, because he felt that after all it was not his to grant. The law provides its own penalty, and in this instance it was a just law known to all men; nor was he, Junius Morton Challoner, a god to set the law aside. Besides, he had his own conviction in the matter. Not in vain did the blood of dead and gone Challoners beat through his heart, and some fine corpuscles of their stern faith had tempered mercy for him always. Therefore it had seemed to him that every transgression brought its own inevitable punishment, a punishment utterly just and which no man



might escape. So it satisfied him today only to know that justice had been done Henry Burgess.

He would have to refuse her, of course; but outside the sun was shining and something of the spring had infused itself into his blood and aroused all the restless, wayward remnants of his youth. Incessantly all afternoon his mind had wandered to his approaching marriage; tender phrases had pulsed into his consciousness and ebbed into a lingering kindness of mood. So perhaps it was the realization of a certain possible weakness that made him a little fearful of this coming interview. Two months before she had practised sorceries upon him, woven him into a web of enchantment and almost had her will of him. Nor had he then been weakened by anything of sentiment; rather it alone had sustained him and saved him in the end. Today he would have to refuse her again, his mere duty in the matter being plain beyond all peradventure, and yet it was going to be hard, he knew, to deny this beautiful, provocative woman the one thing in the world her heart desired. Then some faint survival of his far-off fathers flickered up in him again. They had never shrunk from the performance of their duty. He should not shrink from his today.

"Iden!"

"Yes, sir."

"You may admit Miss Taverner."

The big, awkward fellow turned a little regretfully to the door. He had seen a man's life tremble in the balance, but even as he went out he did not know whether it had been saved or lost.

A man's life! The responsibility of it weighed not a little on Junius Challoner as he sat there waiting. He had been Governor for but some four months now, and the case in point was an unhallowed legacy from the former administration. But already Challoner had been sitting long enough in the chair to realize that this was no inexplicable stray; surely his predecessor had shirked the issue deliberately. For there were indeed elements in the case that made it difficult for one to act discreetly. Both men had had an influence greatly out of the

ordinary, and from both sides infinite pressure had been brought to bear—pressure that had no thought of right or justice or public polity or of anything save the immediate individual; pressure that it had been no easy matter for him to resist. Moreover, it had been of itself no common murder; the political prominence of the murdered man, the handsome, well bred unfortunate who had killed him, above all, the unusual beauty of the woman in the case, combined to make it the supreme sensation of its little hour.

The woman, of course, had been the cause of it all—though there was mystery in abundance, there really had never been any question about that. Her maddening, heartless beauty, the impenetrable mystery of her past, the burden of her history, so hidden and yet so inferable, and of which no man surely knew the whole—perhaps these after all lent the case its one distinction. Then, too, there had been the definite drama of her attitude—she had cost one man his life and another his soul, and yet she scorned them both, they said.

The Governor wondered a little at the heart of such a woman, then drew back from the mere wondering with a wry expression of distaste on his face. In the end, recalling many things, he might even have thrilled with a small fear of her, but Elizabeth Taverner had come into the room.

## II

SHE came toward him with the confident grace of a cat, a certain fine freedom of her heavy limbs visible beneath the revealing long lines of her gown. She was a large woman, nobly tall, fashioned in the noble mold of a goddess. Moreover, there was something compelling and vital in the spirit of the woman that no man might miss. Already, having merely looked upon her, it had swept through the Governor's mind how magnificently alive she was. She was like none of the women of the only class he really knew—his own kind; her sex was perhaps the greatest reality in her life



and not a thing ignored or detached. Verily she seemed a creature from some mysterious, far country, a mere hint of a life utterly beyond his short, human ken. And though she was exquisitely draped, all in black, in a consummate and faultless gown, Junius Challoner in looking upon her was as unconscious of any factitious adornment as if she had been Aphrodite rising from the sea. She would have been splendid had it not been for her heavy, scarlet lips, her insolent, appraising eyes.

"Mr. Challoner."

It was as an individual that she greeted him, but, even while he was bowing wordlessly over her gloved hand, she appealed to him as an official.

"Tomorrow is the twenty-first of April."

"Ah, but Miss Taverner, this is the kind of day when you mustn't mention the passing of time."

"I suppose, Mr. Challoner," she went on steadily, "that Henry Burgess would say the same thing."

Well, perhaps the poor devil would; they were hanging him in the morning. But just the same, it was not quite the reply the Governor had expected, and he covered his chagrin by dragging up an armchair for her. She sat quietly, her hands clasped on the head of her parasol, every atom of her utterly at rest, waiting apparently for him to speak. Then as he only continued to twirl her card between his fingers, she asked him in her indifferent, steady voice:

"Have you thought over, Mr. Challoner, what I asked of you two months ago?"

"Yes, Miss Taverner, I have." He contrived somehow to make the tone silken but unpromising.

"Then you have come to some decision?"

"Yes—surely."

"And that decision—"

"I told you it two months ago. I shall do nothing."

After all, that was the whole of his determination: to do nothing. It was not for him to judge. The man's peers had done that for him, and Junius Challoner should abide by their verdict.

"And there is nothing that can make you alter that decision?"

"Nothing, Miss Taverner, I think."

She was silent and her eyes rested for a moment on the blinding patch of sunlight just beyond the awnings. Then she turned to him again.

"My position in this matter, as you understand, is a trifle—peculiar. You have thought of that?"

"Believe me, Miss Taverner, I have."

"And—"

"It seems to me something rather out of my province, something that you yourself might better have thought of earlier."

The insolent eyes were lowered for a moment, intent seemingly upon the rings beneath her gloves.

"But I was powerless to avert it."

"I wonder?" said the Governor. He was conscious that her eyes, from behind the definite, insolent drooping of their lids, were studying him, appraising all his mental and moral qualities, and he almost shivered with a little sense of her illimitable enmity. Something had gone out of his serenity; he was vaguely perturbed, vaguely apprehensive of he knew not what. As for her frank appraisal of him, certainly he was like no other man with whom she had ever had to deal. She had marked many of his sex for her quarry, but perhaps for the first time the issue was in doubt. Two months before he had baffled her; yet there was nothing of strength apparent in the man at her side. Indeed, as he sat there toying with her card his chest seemed almost sunken and his hands too thin. Nor had he anything of that mere physical virility which alone could awaken any response in her. Rather, what her study discovered was just tenuity of fiber, a certain fineness, a certain reserve, a certain dependence upon the spirit and disregard of the body which she could interpret only as weakness.

But there was still a quality that puzzled her, an element in him that fell quite without the experience she had had of men. And it was precisely this new element that gave her mission such a doubtful issue. Somewhere, she reasoned, even in this man, beneath the in-



herited prejudices, the ordered instincts and calm control, somewhere beneath the long drift of ancestral silt lurked the unconquerable Adam. Could she but once call the irrepressible instinct into momentary being, this man would be as utterly hers as any of his coarser brothers.

"And so you can refuse even me?"

Always men had done her bidding; some of them had beaten her and all of them had cursed her, but always they had done the thing she asked. However, the Governor only shifted his unflinching eyes from the face he was finding so strangely beautiful. "I have refused even his mother," he said simply.

"But a man's life—such a little thing to ask, such a great thing to grant!"

"Alas, Miss Taverner, it is not mine to take or give."

A twinge of annoyance shot across the beautiful face. "But if he dies, Mr. Challoner, it will be you and I that have murdered him!" The Governor smiled a distasteful, wry smile. "Of course he is nothing to me; he never was. But it seems that I have one murder on my shoulders already.

"They have said such horrible things about me," she went on. "Why, they have made me feel as if I had murdered Dave Harnett—the fool! Mr. Challoner, I do not want them to say that I murdered Henry Burgess, too."

"They will say only that Henry Burgess has expiated his crime—nothing more."

"Believe me, Mr. Challoner, they will say a great deal more. How many people honestly believe in capital punishment nowadays? Practically none. They call that murder, too—'legal murder.' The hard old faith of our fathers, that alone justified it, is dead and buried with them. We have come to a newer day, a broader vision. We pity our unfortunates now. We abhor them perhaps, but out of our mercy we do not thirst for their blood."

"And you believe that?"

"Certainly."

She tossed her head and the Governor's eyes rested on her full, round throat, the smooth, even lines of her

lower face. Then with a slightly inattentive mind he went on to enunciate his own sterner faith: "'An eye for an eye'—that is the oldest law in the world."

"And you believe that?"

"Certainly. And I also believe that there is a just and eternal penalty for every one of our transgressions and that not one of us may even hope to escape it. Surely no human hand may interpose between us and our retribution. We cannot escape it; that is the law."

"I do not agree with you. That would be the law of a god for a race of gods. It makes no allowance for our wayward, erring human nature—an incalculable element of unprophesied passions and unfortellable impulses. And it is that element which, disregarding our traditions, makes of us saints and rakes, wastrels and honest men, thieves and priests and—murderers. And it is an element which modifies every law, because it does not beg for mercy but compels it."

The incalculable element! She was leaning toward him, her lovely, earnest face well within the level of his eyes, her gaze holding his. The entangling perfume of her hair, mingled with some harsh Parisian scent, invaded almost clamorously his nostrils. Quite overwhelmingly of a sudden she was appealing to some forgotten, long buried sense, some instinct living faintly after an age of denial. Then with an alarmed flash of realization the Puritan that possessed him awoke to repel the enemy thundering at his gates. With a comprehending little shudder he turned away for he knew now that he was looking into the eyes of Dave Harnett's murderer.

"Your mercy, Miss Taverner," he hurried on, "is a mere confusion of terms. It is just a thinly veiled sentimentalism that is wreaking an immeasurable hurt upon our society. It is loosening our moral fabric, making a dead letter of all our laws. Men in high places go unrebuked for their crimes; an emotional plea saves some intolerable wretch, and other poor devils are urged thereby to the loss of their souls. In our streets reel a thousand sots drunken



from our 'charity.' Why, men are even killing one another for nothing—for women."

There flashed into her face a passion not pretty; to her lips rose horrible, meaningful words. But she mastered her temper. She had one chance even yet. She rose with a grace that was almost languor and leaned her body against his desk.

"Of course you understand, Mr. Challoner, that Henry Burgess is absolutely nothing to me—it's just that I do not want to feel as if I had killed him. Nor do I deny that he is a willful, common murderer. But surely he can expiate his crime quite as well by spending the rest of his days in prison as he can with his life. So that is all I ask of you—just to commute his sentence. His freedom would be"—she sought the right word in her mind—"an embarrassment to me."

"I regret, Miss Taverner, but I have already decided."

"Then there is absolutely nothing in the world that can make you alter that decision?"

"Nothing, Miss Taverner, I think."

"Nothing?" She merely echoed his word, but the whole of her meaning was in her eyes. It seemed to Challoner that he was reading a horrible, almost noble offer there, an earnest of the price she was willing to pay just to have her will of him. He turned stiffly away, but even in turning he was well aware that for the first time in his life the lust of possession was burning wildly within him. There was about the wonderful but obvious beauty of this woman something that had pierced between the plates of the armor he had thought so invulnerable. Two months before a measure of all this had befallen him. Then there had been a cool testing of his strength; an outpost or two perhaps had fallen, but today in its greater intensity it was almost panic. He felt a sudden mad desire to take the hand so near his, to fulfill the inexplicable passion that possessed him. Then she was speaking again, and he was glad of the distraction, the brief respite of her words.

"Remember, Mr. Challoner, you have only a little while left. Tomorrow it will be forever too late." She paused for a moment. "And will you promise me to try in that little while to see it my way? Try to realize my position?"

"I may safely, I believe, promise that."

She had, she felt sure, still one more chance.

With a rush of relief he realized when she had gone how utterly glad he was just to be alone. He wanted first to regain his old serenity, the sure self that had been his an hour before. Acutely he was aware of some insuperable change having come into his life; he had unconsciously drifted out of the quiet current of his old existence into waters wholly strange. Nor was that all; instead of turning back, he was conscious of rushing onward even now. For though he had promised to try to see it her way, it was upon him in a flash that the real trial was going to be ever again to see it his own way.

Then inquisitive old Iden sidled in, his openly curious eyes never at rest.

"Telegram for you, sir."

Challoner indifferently slit the staring yellow envelope, indifferently read the crowded message—it was from Henry Burgess's poor mother—and laid it aside indifferently. Perhaps he did not grasp the whole meaning of the straggling words, for his mind was intent upon another matter—that incalculable element of which Miss Taverner had spoken.

The incalculable element! Painfully, vaguely, almost gropingly, he seemed to have come to the way of understanding at last. He had come to it, moreover, in quite the same old human way. "The world's slow stain" had touched even him, soiled him with an ineradicable soilure, suspended forever his powers of judgment. He had swerved but a hair's breadth from his accustomed path, had felt but a single wayward impulse, yet never again could he judge his fellows so harshly, with such absolute justice. Suddenly, too, his whole standard had shifted; he had to view human things more largely now.



He had come, it seemed, a long way, and had found out finally the whole meaning of mercy; had he only, after all, traversed the distance that lay immutably between the bench and the dock?

He sat there stunned by his new, larger knowledge, looking with enlightened eyes into a newer, larger world. At last his idle fingers fell upon the half-finished letter to Dorothy Rodmore which he had been writing in his hurried leisure ages ago that very afternoon. Ironically enough, the last sentence held his attention. "You could never guess, dearest," he read, "how I have wanted all this day to see you and be with you again, how I have been looking forward to that day of no more partings, and how I have been"—it ended abruptly. With a ghostly smile he looked up from the meaningless mockery of the words, then impulsively tore the letter across and dropped the fragments into his wastebasket. For the entangling perfume of another woman's hair lingered persistently in his nostrils, and almost visibly another woman's presence lingered at his side.

Stirred by a languid, new sense of impatience he went to the western windows and watched the lengthening rays of the setting sun caress the vivid green of the grasses. Inevitably as he looked out upon the young and growing world his mind reverted to Henry Burgess, that poor devil so soon to leave it all. To leave it all! Almost in abhorrence, shuddering a little, Challoner drew back, repulsed by the terror and the pathos of it—it seemed all so needless, so suddenly horrible and heartless and hateful. A gust of kindness surged through him and he wondered if ultimately the unfortunate fellow were wholly to blame; but he found this last impossible of belief with the memory of the inexplicable impulses that had possessed him not an hour before abiding still in his mind. He was not yet utterly sure of the validity of his own vision, for the great light breaking over him had left him a little blinded still, but vaguely and surely now he sensed an extenuation that his aloofness had denied him yesterday. Just because he had loved this provoca-

tive, wonderful woman neither wisely and well, never to see the long, spring sunset again—God! The cruelty of the world!

### III

CHALLONER hurried that evening into the Louis Quinze dining room of the Cheltenham, almost oppressive with its splendors of gilt and mirrors and maroon hangings. He was late for his dinner, and hungry and puzzled, and he looked forward to the luxury of merely eating not only as a necessity but as a distraction. So he followed the quiet waiter eagerly through the wilderness of white linen and carved red chairs, laughing women with beautiful big hats, and men gravely pleased or pleased not at all. The waiter was finally pulling a chair from under a secluded table when, glancing inquisitively around, Challoner beheld, with a rush of eagerness he dared not confess, dared scarcely realize, Elizabeth Taverner almost at his side. She was at the next table and she was alone.

She was sitting idly, her hands clasped before her, her elbows on the table, and she smiled up to him a smile that was wholly a welcome and more than half an invitation. In an exquisite old rose dinner gown she was part of the place's splendor. The net stretched across her white shoulders disclosed the faultless and even curve of them, and the long, tight sleeves falling over her wrists and upon the backs of her hands hinted in an intimate, friendly way of the sheer perfection of her arms. But the Governor was curiously critical—surely, old rose was not quite her color; it was just a trifle too high in tone, a subtle discord rather than a precise harmony. And her lips, he thought, were a little too scarlet. He stayed the waiter with a gesture and addressed her. "You are dining alone?"

"Utterly, Mr. Challoner. It's quite, in fact," she went on, "as if one were waiting for you."

He had been sitting across from her a full moment before he had made up his mind really to do so. But he was far from regretting the rash act. Agreeably



enough, she was revealed to him as wholly a different woman. There was nothing now of her infinite insolence, her set purpose, her shrouded past or her unshrouded sex; the note of physical appeal which she had struck so insistently in the afternoon had gone. Too, she seemed wholly at home in this lovely place, as if it were a symbol of the world in which she found her kin and had her being, and her allusive, polished talk flowed intimately on, with ease and without vivacity, as fluent, as rich as that of any woman of his own kind. And he found her charming.

Challoner had had a fear—it had been that, in fact, which made him hesitate at first—that she might want to resume their talk just where they had left off at sunset. "I shall not utterly give up hope," she had said ominously in parting, and he had not forgotten it. But she never once by word or hint reverted to it. It was an omission that had the effect of placing their whole relation on a new and different plane.

They had drifted far toward a sort of intimacy, had come, in actual things, almost to dessert, when they heard out in the lobby a sleepy voice droning monotonously on his name: "Mr. Challoner! Mr. Challoner!" Through every corridor, faintly in the distant bar, they heard the bell boy's indifferent voice intoning the broad syllables; a moment more, and he was calling from the far end of the café—"Mr. Challoner! Mr. Challoner!" And Elizabeth Taverner smiled the meaningful ghost of a smile as she watched him half rise in his chair to beckon the boy. The movement had, as she divined, the effect of focussing every eye in the crowded place upon the two of them, and there was a recognition in the quick, intensive wrinkles about her eyes of the central fact that underlay it all—for she, beyond denial, was known to everyone there quite as well as he.

"Message for you, sir." The boy held a tarnished salver toward him.

The Governor tore open the envelope, and then with a clouding face dismissed the boy. "It's all right. There is no answer."

The boy gone, he read it carefully once

again, a settled frown on his features. "Dearest," it said, "can't you please for my sake, for the sake of his poor mother, do something for that unhappy Harry Burgess? Commute his sentence to life if you like, but please do not let him die." And the name at the end was Dorothy Rodmore.

In a flash he was recalled to the old plane of his life. She was his fiancée, this Dorothy Rodmore, and he held in his hands by chance the ultimate gift of one man's life. He glanced sharply at Miss Taverner, but she was only indolently scrutinizing the striking cerise gown wherewith one fair neighbor had won a moment's splendor. Her face averted, and with this new tumult in his soul he felt suddenly alone; the whole past stretched out jealous fingers to reclaim him, and the whole future loomed anew before him, very stern and very sweet with the precise ideals of Dorothy Rodmore. Then he found himself shrinking in a kind of horror from it all, shrinking explicitly and openly, his whole heart crying out for comfort to the woman across the table. He crushed the paper in his hand.

From the hidden orchestra the strains of "La Bohème" drifted out, passionate and lucid, and the woman turned to him glowing: "Ah, how I love it!"

She averted her face to follow the flowing Italian tunes, and the Puritan battling for mastery in his soul paused to whisper that her kind always loved this sensuous music. Then her long silence and the exquisite, measured cadences won him back to happiness. He put his feet firmly upon that new plane of friendship with her; surely he could not as the Puritan demanded, regard this as just an interlude, a mere wait between the acts in the little drama of his life. Overwhelmingly the impulse came to make it last forever.

Their dinner passed and they were already in the corridor before he realized that the choice was confronting him again. Once more he took the plunge.

"And this evening?"

"Why?" But something steady in her eyes showed how clearly she had caught the import of his question.



"You have no—engagement?"

She smiled, answering him with a swift gesture.

"Then shall we go to the vaudeville? There really isn't any other place."

She accepted with an indifferent shrug. It was all one to her; she had for the present a single purpose in life, and so she had everything to gain and not a thing in the world to lose. She only wondered just what might be passing in his mind.

They sat in a lower box; half his world might see them there. It was enough for him merely to sit by her side, to be freed from the necessity of thought and spared the necessity of saying anything. He might, had he been a little less comfortable, noticed a certain abstraction, a sense of remoteness that grew upon her. Before the performance was over she recalled him with a single word, a hand upon his arm. "Come."

In the foyer he asked his wondering "Why?"

"I cannot let you do it," she answered softly, and there was a new quality of sweetness, of interest in her voice. Then for the present she evaded his questionings and led him resolutely back to the Cheltenham with a detachment that imposed silence upon him. Even within the hotel she did not stop; resolutely she led him up to her apartment. The moment the door had closed behind them she turned to him swiftly. "Mr. Challoner, there is something I am going to ask of you."

"But—" he began.

"It's about what I asked you to do this afternoon."

"Yes?"

"Well—you must not."

"But—" he began once more; she stopped him with a gesture.

"Believe me, Mr. Challoner, you must not do it. It's not that you are right or that I was wrong; it's just that I see it all differently now. You must not do it."

He was looking upon her with seeing eyes at last; her changed face, her subdued manner amazed him beyond words.

"But, my dear Miss Taverner, permit me—I do not understand."

"There were two of them at the theater," she explained, "and they nudged one another and whispered—horrible things. I saw their lips, and I could read their eyes."

He followed her words easily enough, and in a remote, veiled way he sensed her meaning, but it was from her attitude alone that he grasped it. They had said horrible things; in a flash he knew precisely what. But the central great fact did not at once engross him; rather was he held by a nearer spectacle—the inexplicable effect the whole had had upon the woman. He knew of course that she had plotted all this and that she had almost achieved her end. The guerdon had been firmly in her grasp and now she was throwing it away. Surely here, too, he thought, was evidence of the incalculable element.

To him it had been but a moment of comprehension; to her it had been an age of accusation and reproach.

"It was all a game," she confessed, her face averted, "a deliberate game on my part. I wanted to compromise you, to entangle your good name with my bad one. Well—I have. And now there is only one way out—you must not do it. For if you do that is all the confession the cruel world will ask."

A great curiosity overpowered him, a desire to understand the inmost secret of this most incalculable act.

"But, Miss Taverner," he asked in his coldest voice, "why this sudden change of heart?"

"Because you are the only gentleman I have ever known; because I have found at last one of your sex whom I can respect."

She sat down gracelessly in an enveloping chair and went on softly with an effect of moaning it to herself: "God! If I could only have known you ten years ago, how different everything might have been!"

He was finding her splendid even in her momentary collapse—a collapse that was disclosing more plainly than ever the immitigable chasm between them.

"And now it is—too late?"

"Yes—ten years too late."

Then a new passion possessed her, a



passion to save—Junius Challoner. She rose, calm again, determined; no doubt she would fight for him as unscrupulously as she had fought against him.

"And now you must go, dear. God knows, we are not safe here. Everywhere there are prying eyes and lying tongues. You must go and you mustn't do it—else the whisperers would never cease to tell the price I paid for Henry Burgess's life."

"Yes," said Challoner, pointlessly enough, a certain resolution uppermost in his mind. And if he paused a moment, it was just to recover his old equanimity; this, he knew as certainly as she, was the end. In her moment of collapse he had stared into a forbidding chasm—a chasm he might not cross and into which he was unwilling to descend.

"Well—" He sought words, but none came; after all there was left for them to say only good-bye. He said it now.

She echoed him. "Good-bye." And she would have kissed his hand, but he would not let her.

#### IV

HE was out in the corridor before he realized that he had been something more than a mere onlooker at a drama, that he, too, had been an actor therein. There was a chaos in his mind; he had been an actor in an incalculable comedy, a protagonist in scenes so wildly unreal that he hadn't in the whirl of them had a chance to seize the motive of the whole or catch the central clue.

Yet out of the unreality and the whirl persisted one unconfused resolution—a resolution to do the one thing she had forbidden him. He would go back to the old life again, and already the old

self he had slipped aside for a moment was settling upon him, but evermore a certain insuperable charity must remain as a remembrance of his one small lapse. He had yielded to one untoward impulse and the world would never be quite the same again. He felt with a sudden new humility that he had learned life's last and largest lesson and learned it well—that it is not given us to judge.

He had, of course, infinite readjustments to make, yet, as the hours passed he could not repress incessantly applying his new ideals of mercy to the one case that most possessed his mind. He had done today an incalculable thing; Henry Burgess had done no more. But a kind fate had interposed to spare him, and Junius Challoner was finding in the fact a new duty—an inevitable incentive to kindness. The incalculable element! Miss Taverner had given it a name and he would accept it; she had said that it compelled mercy—well, he should not deny that now.

Finally in his pocket he came upon a stabbing, yellow thing—the message from Dorothy Rodmore. Poor Dorothy! He owed her something, too. Then he realized how suddenly lonely he was for her. He smoothed out the sheet and read it through carefully once again. She had asked for Henry Burgess's life; well, he would give him his freedom, too. There might be unpleasant consequences to be sure, but such should be his expiation. Swiftly a menacing, black shadow was brushed from his mind. He had come into his own again.

The short spring night was beginning to wane when he went to the telephone.

Among the enemies he found he had made the next morning was one woman.



FOR affinities—A married man's love is of his wife a fling apart; 'tis some other woman's soul existence.



MOST prisoners will reform if you give them time.



# MOWN FIELDS

By Leonard Doughty

TODAY I trod the autumn fields alone;  
Alone with the dull, ceaseless ache and pain  
Of parting at my weary heart and brain;  
And underneath the sodden land was sown  
With stubble where the mowers late had mown;  
And overhead the limitless inane;  
And at my heavy heart the sick refrain,  
The *parted . . . parted . . . parted . . .* like a moan.

And there I saw my life in symbol pass:  
The mown fields and the sky of bitter brass.  
And thus, I thought, forever shall it be!  
Forever—and no hint of spring to lure  
My hopeless heart to effort toward your pure  
High soul that never stooped except to me.

## II

Today the sunset was of sodden gray,  
And a desolate wind went wearily to the west,  
As one returning from a bootless quest  
Seeks an unwelcome harborage where he may;  
And the low clouds moved on their sullen way,  
Like beasts that roam, too tired to lie and rest.  
And now a night more sullen and oppressed  
Leers starless, lampless, lifeless, sodden gray.

And here above this hateful little town  
I stand, a shadow on these hills I hate,  
Weary past sleep and hopeless past despair;  
And see the roof above you, looking down  
Across a moment's dark—as wide as fate:  
And cold as your disdain, night's death damp in my hair.



# THE WHITE STOCKING

By D. H. Lawrence

"I'M going to get up, Teddilinks," said Mrs. Whiston, and she jumped out briskly.

"What's got you?" asked Whiston.

"Nothing," she replied.

It was only about seven o'clock, on a cold morning of grayish color—forty years ago.

Whiston, not by nature inquisitive, lay and watched her. She was a pretty little thing, with her rather short, curly black hair all tousled. She got dressed quickly, throwing her clothes upon her. Everything about her was untidy, but it only made Whiston smile and feel warm, even when he saw her break off a torn end of lace from her petticoat and fling it on the dressing table. She stood before the mirror, half dressed, and roughly scrambled together her profuse, rather short hair. He loved the softness and quickness of her young shoulders.

"Rise up," she said, laughing, to him, "and shine forth."

They had been married two years, and yet, when she had gone, he felt as if all the life and warmth and interest had passed out of the room, and he knew it was a cold morning.

"What's got her now?" he wondered. She usually lay in bed till nigh on nine o'clock. Then he rose himself. There was no longer any reason why he should stay.

The house was a small seven-and-sixpenny dwelling in town. Whiston fastened a belt round his waist, and in his shirt and trousers, went down the steep, narrow stairs. He heard her singing away in her snatchy fashion. Passing down the narrow hall, he stumped across the kitchen. He was

a well made young fellow of about twenty-eight. The water drummed into the kettle, and she began to whistle. He loved the quick way in which she seemed to dodge a lighted match into the gas jet. Then, with a little gesture of triumph, she popped the kettle onto the ring of flame.

"Teddilinks!" she cried as she turned round and saw him. Then she was gone into the gloomy kitchen. She wore a kimono jacket of black silk embroidered with wistaria, pinned across her breast. But one of the sleeves, coming unfastened, showed a delightful little arm.

"Why don't you sew your sleeve up?" he asked, suffering because he thought that round arm might be cold.

"Where?" she asked, peering round. "Nuisance!" she exclaimed, seeing the tear. Then, quickly and lightly, she went on setting the table.

It was an old house. The kitchen was of fair size but rather gloomy. It was plainly, rather coldly furnished. Suddenly there was heard the flap of the letter box away at the front door.

"I'll go," she cried, and flew down the passage. Whiston gathered sticks and firelighters.

Mrs. Whiston opened the door. The postman was a ruddy-faced man, who had been a soldier. He was smiling broadly.

"There's one or two for you," he said caressingly. She put her hand to her hair, and shook her head at him.

"It is well for you there are," she said.

"Nay, they're none of my sending," he laughed, standing on the threshold, not attempting to go.

"But you'll catch it if they're not nice," she said, and, beginning to exam-



ine her envelopes, promptly forgot him. He stood for a moment or two looking at her, waiting. But he saw her turning away oblivious.

"Good morning," he called, half disagreeably.

"'Morning," she answered brightly, but without knowing to whom.

She closed the door, and tore open the thin envelope. It was a long valentine, of a man glancing lugubriously over his shoulder at the ghost face of a young lady smiling and showing her teeth. It was entitled: "Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still."

She looked at it, and drew herself up, offended. Then she dropped it onto the floor. The second envelope contained a white silk handkerchief. She sniffed its perfume discriminatingly, put the silk against her cheek, and tore open the third envelope. It contained apparently a white pocket handkerchief, neatly folded. She shook it out sharply. It was a white cotton stocking, very fine. Quickly she perceived that there was something in the toe of the stocking.

She opened the door against which she was standing, and went into the front room. It was rather prettily furnished, with lustre glasses on the mantelpiece, and water colors on the wall. She dropped the handkerchief onto the round table, and dived her hand into the white stocking. As was her habit, she caught her lower lip between her teeth in her effort to get at the something which was hidden in the toe of the thing. At last, with a little flush of triumph, she brought it out, and with nimble fingers unfolded the tiny packet. It was a pair of pearl earrings. She went pink with joy. Hurrying to the mirror, she began to fix them in her ears, which had been pierced. Again she caught her lower lip between her teeth, with the effort. Curiously concentrated and intent she seemed as, with her head bent on one side, she fingered the lobe of her ear. At last the earrings were fixed, the pearl drops hung under her rosy small ears. She looked at herself with satisfaction, and shook her head to make the drops swing. They went chill against her neck in little tickling

touches. She smirked to herself. Then suddenly she turned to read the posy that had been wrapped round the jewel.

Pearls are fair, but you are fairer.

Wear these for me, and I love the wearer.

At this she looked displeased, and gave a little snort of contempt. But she turned with joy to the mirror again, twinkling her earrings.

Whiston, who was making a fire, realizing that she did not come, suddenly thought she might have had bad news, and he jumped up quickly and hurried down the passage. When she heard him she started round quickly, the color flying in her cheeks, and watched with her alert blue eyes. He appeared in the doorway, a biggish fellow with a bit of thin, close mustache and blue eyes that seemed the very blue of kindliness.

"What's up?" he asked, entering.

"Valentines," she said briskly, but guiltily turning away from him to the table. She snatched up the silk handkerchief and thrust it under his nose.

"Nice smell," she said.

"H'm," he answered. "Who's that from?"

"Now how should I know, when it's a valentine?" she said.

"Why, I s'd think you wouldn't *have* valentines, now, from folk as you don't know."

"Why not? I don't know *who's* sent it me, Teddilinks," she said, teasing him, shaking her head, and suddenly stopping because of the earrings.

He stood still a moment, going serious.

"They've no right to send you valentines now," he said.

"Why not? Why can't I have valentines? *You* don't send me any."

"I never knew it was Valentine's Day. Haven't you really got any idea who sent it?"

"No, not the ghost of an idea. Look, there's my initial in heliotrope silk. 'E' for Elsie, the nice little gelsy—" she said, showing him the corner of the handkerchief.

"Get out," he said. "You know who it's from."

"I tell you I don't," she answered. "Have you seen the comic?"

"No," he grunted. Then he saw the



white stocking lying on the table. "Is this one, an' all?" he asked, picking it up. She went very pink and still.

"It's Sam Adams—" she replied. "He sent me one last year; I never told you, because I knew you'd be mad."

Whiston picked up the piece of paper, holding the stocking dangling in front of him.

Pearls are fair, but you are fairer.

Wear these for me, and I love the wearer.

"Damned fool!" he exclaimed. "He'd better wear white stockings himself; it's all he's fit for. Why didn't you tell me last year?"

"Because I didn't want you to bother."

"I'll bother him, the fool!" and he turned sulkily aside. He was not good-looking, and his roughened skin seemed to have been slightly pitted with small-pox. His neck was smooth, however, and he was perfectly strong and healthy. Only his blue eyes were honest and kindly, so that one at once loved him. Also he had the easy bearing of a healthy, good man.

She was afraid of his seeing the earrings. Slipping past him and going to the passage, she cried again:

"Have you seen the comic?"

"No," he answered, following her. Seeing her bare arm through the torn sleeve of her kimono, he clasped it with his large hand, gently, with a tenderness of protection and appeal. Everything seemed to stand still in her, for a second, as she realized how he loved her.

"It's a horrid thing," she cried, pointing to the paper on the floor of the passage. Then she fled upstairs, and stood panting in front of her mirror, hastily taking off her earrings.

Whiston stooped and picked up the cartoon.

"Her bright eyes haunt me still," he read softly to himself. "P'sh!" But this did not touch him much.

"Isn't it horrid of them!" she cried, reappearing at the top of the stairs.

"Parcel of fools," he replied.

He stood looking at the cartoon. She ran lightly down the stairs, and leaping from the lower steps, threw her arms round his neck and hung onto him. Her

wrists pressed into his throat, preventing his breathing. He lowered his head, and she hung from his neck in the air, swinging, laughing. He was smiling, too. He liked to feel his neck so strong that he could swing her lightly on it. He loved to feel her hands clasped on him, to have her weight on him. He caught her in his arms and went down to the kitchen with her. She looked round, as she sat in his arms.

"The fire's gone out again," she said, clutching two handfuls of hair and making him nod his head as she pulled it. He put her down.

She ran about, finishing the preparations for breakfast while he kneeled before the fire, coaxing it into life. As he bent down to blow the coals, the veins in his neck stood out, and his shirt collar seemed too tight. She liked him, but she knew him by now. It was more exciting to think of the earrings. She saw them lying in a little box in her drawer, slim white things, and they rejoiced her heart. She cared nothing for Sam Adams. The fool had sat next to her in the tramcar one day, and had invited her to a coffee. Well, she was quite willing to drink a coffee in the restaurant—why not? The earrings, at any rate, were a joy to her. She would have a lovely time wearing them, dressing herself up, when Edward had gone to business. She felt a delicious sensation of having a treasure.

He poked in a red coal with his forefinger, then got up, his trousers bagging at the knees.

"How long shall you be, Teddilinks?" she asked, from the scullery. Her voice was bright and gay. He went to look at her. She turned round, laying her head on her shoulder and laughing at him, something in the manner of the girl in the Romney picture.

"Your valentines have set you up," he said, with a smile that came in spite of some anxiety between his brows.

"Haven't they just!" she cried.

He rolled up his sleeves and rolled back his shirt neck to wash. She liked the solid man he was. It made her feel irresponsible, free to enjoy her earrings and her little pleasures. The vigorous



way in which he rubbed his face and neck with soap amused her. He dried his face and breast. The hair stood upon his forehead; his face was red from the cold water, his eyes very fresh and blue.

"You've not seen anything of Sam Adams lately, have you?" he asked roughly, from between the folds of the towel.

"No; I saw him in the tram one morning."

"Did you speak to him?"

"He spoke to me."

"I should ha' thought you'd not ha' let him."

"Well, I couldn't cry out as soon as I saw him get in the tram, 'You mustn't speak to me,' could I?"

He did not answer, but went into the kitchen and struggled with his collar. She scarcely noticed him, and yet something in his movements, even his wrists buttoned in the shirt cuffs, gave her a feeling of ease and liberty. He was there to look after her, so she could do as she liked.

At breakfast he ate hurriedly, almost clumsily. It did not offend her. None of his movements ever displeased her, only sometimes his attitude to her was irksome.

"An' I'll bet you chattered to him like a magpie," he said, putting down his cup after a long drink.

"No, I didn't."

"What *did* you say?"

"I've forgot. He asked me if I was going to the ball on St. Patrick's night, and I said I'd got nobody to go with."

"You can go if you want to go."

"With you dragging behind like wet weather."

They had reached rather a sore place.

"It's a wonder you didn't say you'd go wi' him."

"He said he'd send me a ticket."

"You *are* a damned little good-for-nowt, talking to him at all." He was angry, and his eyes glared at her in hostility. This always roused her to spiteful resentment, because there seemed a little contempt in his stare. His heavy mouth was pushed out sulkily. He ducked his head. It was as if his

fine clear-cut temples and his steady eyes were degraded by the rather bestial anger of the lower part of his face.

"Oh, dear, if I've got to go about with my mouth shut all day, it's a poor lookout," she said.

And he knew she *was* rather lonely and unoccupied while he was at work, and his heart grew more sullen.

They parted angrily. At the last minute he could not go out of the house without taking leave of her, so he kissed her.

"I shan't be home till seven," he said. "Mind you go out." But his kiss meant little to her. He only kissed her because he would feel uncomfortable afterward during the day if he had not done so. It was not for her sake but for his own.

In a moment she went upstairs and put on her beloved earrings. They did make her happy—why she neither knew nor asked. But every time she felt their weight on her ears, every time they swung against her neck, every time she caught sight of them in the mirror, in motion below her ears, a flush of delight came over her.

She wore them all the morning, at her housework. It was exciting to go to the door in them, wondering if the baker would notice. That day the tradesmen found her very attractive and pretty.

Whiston was a traveler for a small lace firm. He went on the near-at-hand round. All day he was busy, thinking of his work, of his orders: hurrying to the train with his bag, going to the various tradesmen, getting a hurried lunch in a commercial hotel, talking in the railway carriage about politics and the new machinery. He was scarcely aware of the small gnawing that went on inside him, making him hasty and active, stimulating him to get through a great deal of work, driving him on and on: the gnawing of anxiety in his heart, because of his uneasiness about his wife.

She, when she thought of her husband, rather angrily put him aside. She could not be happy, with him there. He was always getting between her and her happiness, cutting her off from it.



## II

SHE had been a warehouse girl, in Adams' lace factory, before she was married. Sam Adams, her employer, had a smallish factory. He was a bachelor of about forty-three, a man getting fat and red-faced with good living, but healthy. He had a big, military mustache of brown color; his head was bald. His eyes were just a bit glazed with good living, but he was active and good-natured. He drank considerably, and it was never quite certain what he would do next.

He had paid her marked attentions. He often came into the warehouse, dressed in a rather sporting reefer coat of fawn color, and trousers of small black and white check, a smart cap on his head, a scarlet carnation in his buttonhole. Then he stood and talked to her. He had once been in a cavalry regiment, and his chest still stuck out in front. He usually kept his head covered, because then he was good-looking if rather common in appearance. It did not suit him, with his red, full-fed face, to be bald.

She had never been quite comfortable with his talk. True, she enjoyed the refined pronunciation and the accent of a gentleman. But what he said was—well, a bit free, particularly if he had been drinking.

Meanwhile Whiston was courting her. She liked him, too. He was a man who knew what he was about, a man whom one felt one could trust. And she loved some quality in his voice, something honest and warm, so that she felt she could leave herself to him.

Adams gave a Christmas party every year to his workpeople. On the first night came clerks, overseers, warehouse girls; on the second, the factory hands. Whiston had agreed to escort Elsie Swain. They were not really engaged; nothing was settled between them. But he asked if he might call for her, and she said yes. This was two years ago.

It was a cold night but dry, with clouds rolling thin across the moon. As there was only about a mile to go, Elsie decided to walk. Besides, cabs were a

luxury beyond them. She was very proud of herself, in her plain, close-fitting dress of blue silk, showing her neat little body above her great full skirts. Wrapped in a big shawl, Whiston stalking beside her with her shoes in his pocket, she had gone happily through the dark streets. As they passed between the park gates, her heart was beating quickly. The Castle Rock rose high and dark above them. She hastened along under the naked trees, where the odd yellow lamps went dotting down the darkness. Overhead, very high, the rock blotted black into the moonlit, moving sky, the square form of the castle cut out in silhouette.

She was rather late. Trembling, in the cloakroom, she gave up her shawl, and glanced at herself in the mirror. She had loose bunches of curls on either side of her face, and her hair in curls down her back. Glancing at her own blue, alert eyes, she said she would do.

She hung in the doorway of the brilliant drawing room, afraid to venture. Many people were disporting themselves, like bathers, accustomed to the glare of the lamps within the room. She heard the ringing laugh of Sam Adams. It made her slightly uncomfortable. He was evidently not quite sober.

Then she entered. At the same moment she saw him advancing to meet her. He looked well in evening dress, but his face was very red and shiny and his bald head shone. Nevertheless, he had a big, fine figure. In a moment he was clasping her hand in his own warm palm, and laughing heartily for no reason whatsoever, but welcoming her. She saw minute beads of moisture on his head, his strong teeth showing in a laugh behind the great, bushy mustache, his eyes slightly dulled and moist with hilarity. She did wonder why he laughed.

"So you've come at last!" he said, offering her his arm. "You're like royalty, keeping us waiting." And she was floating down the room, feeling as if she were in midair. He was a very jolly man, whatever might be said against him.

He paid more attention to her than to



anyone. She had quite forgotten Whiston. All the time she seemed to be floating on air. He had kept his card almost clean for her to give him dances.

"Oh, but you are such a splendid dancer," she said, afraid.

"Else I daren't have asked *you* to condescend to me," he replied, smiling.

This made her blush. She was not quite pleased. She gave him a Schottisch and quadrilles.

"But you're not going to pinch me at that rate!" he said, with evident sincerity. This made her flush with pleasure.

"What about the first?" he asked, consulting his card.

She blushed and agreed. He wrote his name against half a dozen dances.

The music began; everything quickened into life. They were dancing together.

"How is the floor?" he asked her anxiously.

"Lovely," she answered.

"Is it all right?" he repeated.

She was afraid she did not dance well. But he gave her such support, she seemed to divine where he wanted her to go. This was the joy of it. His hand held her firmly in the small of her back, and seemed to speak to her, holding her, carrying her, telling her what to do, and a thousand other things. He was a man who knew what he was about.

At the end, flushed, she looked straight at him, quickly, saying: "It was lovely."

He laughed with a queer little laugh, pleased throughout the whole of him. And he paid her attentions.

She saw nothing of Whiston. He did not dance, so would probably be playing cards. She did not trouble about him. Everything seemed vague, and there was a delicious conflagration in her blood. People talked to her, she to them. The women were jealous of her. She was the most important person present. The host had singled her out. She knew he scarcely was aware of anyone in the room but her, and she cared only about him.

While she was sitting after a dance, Harry Adams hobbled up to her. He

was Sam Adams' nephew. He had sprained his ankle on the ice and could not dance. Whiston and he were friends.

He was a thin, sandy, freckled fellow of about thirty. It was he who, in fact, did most of Sam Adams' work at the factory.

"I'm a lame dog at a hunt," he said, sitting down beside her.

"What a shame!" she replied.

"The women always say the nicest men don't dance," he laughed.

"I'm sure *I* don't say it," she replied.

"You have no occasion. You are having a good time?"

"Oh, lovely."

"Yes, my uncle dances well. Come down to the cardroom with me, will you? If I can't have the honor of a dance, I may offer you my arm in a walk."

She never quite knew how to take him. And he was almost too much of a gentleman for her; it made her uneasy. She was more flattered by his wanting her to walk on his arm than by Sam Adams' adulation. But it did not give her so much gratification.

She passed down the room with the limping man. In the cardroom they were smoking.

"Call this the nether world," said Harry Adams to her.

"What are you playing—whist?" she asked.

"I was playing poker for pennies."

She looked round the room. It was vague with smoke. Some men were playing dominoes. There was the rattle of the pieces, the chatter of talk. Whiston sat at cribbage with another man.

"Are you white or red?" she asked him, looking at the pegging board.

"Red," answered Whiston gloomily. He was not in evening dress. His hair was ruffled; he looked unhappy.

"Oh, you *are* losing!"

"You'd better cut for him and bring him luck," said Harry Adams, laughing.

"Can I?" she cried, delighted with the sense of her importance. Whiston sat back in his chair. She leaned in front of him and cut his pack. She watched him eagerly to see if he would win. She bent over his cards, her hair tickling his face. He made ten.



"You see!" she cried.

And Whiston gave a little laugh, comforted.

Just then Sam Adams came in, very ruddy. He had been to change his collar.

"Well, how are we here?" he called jovially.

"A1," came the answer.

"Got everything you want?"—and so he came forward to the table, where Elsie and his nephew were watching the cards. There was something very offensive to Whiston in the big front and tight, erect body of their host. He seemed to be obtrusive in his coarse manner. Always he was amiable and loud.

"Hello, Miss Elsie, you flown down here?"

"Come to bring Whiston luck," said the nephew ironically.

"Oh! Glad to hear it. Bring anybody luck—would Miss Swain. So, how's the game goin', Whiston?"

"Oh, all right," replied Whiston, who had flushed a dull red.

"Game's all right, is it? That's good. Now then, Mademoiselle Elsie, *tu me feras le bonheur*"—and he offered her his arm.

"Which *bonheur* is that, Uncle Sam?" asked the nephew, very ironically. The elder man burst into a loud laugh.

"Don't ask questions, my boy!" he said, radiant.

Elsie put her hand on his sleeve in spite of herself. She vaguely felt that she was doing something she did not want to do. And yet she *did* want to go out on Sam Adams' arm. She only hated it when he laughed. And sometimes she disliked his voice. When he was silent, and she walked on his arm, feeling him erect and finely clad beside her, she was very gratified, first in the room.

In the interval, he took her down for refreshments. The room was crowded with people; the servants were bewildered. Elsie left herself in his charge. She felt very proud, hearing Sam Adams' voice commanding the servants to her bidding. She was too excited to eat. There was a bottle of champagne, and she sipped her glass, afraid of making herself cough.

She had not noticed that Whiston was in the room. As usual, he was attending to the plain, retiring ladies of uncertain age. Such folk always loved him. He waited on them, because he could not bear that they should feel neglected or slighted. But he did not hear or see anything of them: he only knew that Sam Adams was playing the gallant to Elsie Swain, and that she was hanging her dark curls over her glass of champagne, sipping, and looking at the red-faced man with her wide, watchful eyes, as if half hypnotized.

Whiston struggled at the sideboard for coffee for Miss Breffit. He could hear Sam Adams, who was getting more and more affected by wine and heat and by the pretty girl who watched him with those wide, watchful eyes—talking, laughing almost with a little neighing sound. As if fascinated, the young fellow went toward the group, balancing his two coffee cups.

Sam Adams was just telling about an exciting time he had had during the last revolution in Paris. He drew himself up in front of Elsie, erect, acting the part of a man who is being challenged. He said something rapidly, then started back like one who draws a sword with a flourish.

This drawing of the sword sent one of the cups of coffee spinning out of Whiston's hand.

"Gad, that's scalded me!" cried Adams, and with a ridiculously exaggerated gesture, he leapt and pulled the wet trouser from against his leg. Whiston stood still, looking him up and down. Elsie giggled in spite of herself. The whole room was silent.

Adams, his face purple, looked up at Whiston, struggling hard to repress his rage.

"Why don't you *look* where you are going?" he said, his anger sounding in his tone.

"You knocked it out of my hand," said Whiston.

A servant hastened up with a cloth.

"It's scalded me, right enough," said Adams. Then, putting back the servant, who would have rubbed the coffee from his leg: "Nay, you can't rub it; it's



scalded me, I tell you. I shall have to go and see to it. Excuse me, Miss Elsie."

He went off in a towering passion. Immediately he was gone, a smile broke over the faces of the guests, and a loud buzz of talk began. Adams had exclaimed so loudly, and looked so ridiculous, standing holding the cloth of his trousers away from his leg, that everyone was infected.

Elsie made all haste to finish her eating. Harry Adams had come to keep her in countenance.

"Do you think it has hurt Mr. Adams much?" she asked. But there was almost a touch of malice in the extreme candor of the question.

"I hope not," replied the nephew. "Was it *café au lait* or black coffee?"

"Oh, it had milk in," replied Elsie.

"Then I know the milk is a good way below boiling point. No, I think there is no need for us to take it to heart."

"I'm very glad," replied Elsie. "It might have been awful if it had been black coffee."

"Frightful," said the nephew. "Is Whiston out of countenance over it, too?"

"I don't know," she answered.

"Let's go and see."

And the lame man limped down the room to where Whiston sat beside Miss Breffit.

"Wasn't it *awfully* unfortunate!" exclaimed Miss Breffit. "But really it *was* Mr. Adams' fault—if it was anybody's *fault*. It was a pure accident. But I say, I'm awfully sorry. It was my coffee that did it, too."

"You must have some more," said Harry Adams. "I'll tell the girl to bring it. Whiston, you look very down."

"I'm a fool," replied Whiston.

"So's most folk," replied Harry Adams, and he called to a waitress for coffee.

"You're not bothering yourself, are you?" asked Elsie Swain, her heart touched by the gloom on Whiston's face. Suddenly he glanced at her, and their eyes met. He seemed to look right through that shallow self of hers, which was playing with Adams, into her real

being. It hurt her, and she turned aside, blushing with shame. But she seemed unable to get away from the influence of those honest blue eyes, that demanded something of her.

"Bothering about a drop of spilled coffee!" he exclaimed. "No."

"It's no use crying over spilled milk," said Miss Breffit.

"Oh, it depends what it's spilled on," said the nephew.

"On Mr. Adams' leg!" mocked Elsie. "But I *had* to laugh."

"Yes," said the nephew. "It was the leap of a sportive fawn."

"Gad, that's scalded me!" mocked Elsie, throwing up her hand. Adams was just coming down the room. He hated her, knowing she ridiculed him. He could not bear to be laughed at. So he cut her.

Whiston began to be mollified. Directly after the dancing began. Sam Adams was trying to regain his composure, but he felt he had made a fool of himself, and things were uncomfortable. As long as possible he avoided Elsie. She sat feeling rather unhappy, and wished she could go away. Once Whiston, to assert his rights, came across to speak to her.

But at last it was her turn to dance the quadrilles with Adams. He came, very stiff and martial, his excessive joviality gone. Occasionally, nervously, he brushed up his mustache with the tips of his fingers, repeating the movement. He was not sweating any more. He looked over her shoulder, ignoring her as he spoke to her. She felt exceedingly humiliated, yet could not refuse to dance with him. Bewildered, ashamed, she went forward on his arm, feeling Whiston's eyes upon her. She had been a despicable flirt that evening: she hated Sam Adams.

At the last minute, when all were nearly ready, she thought she wanted her handkerchief. In confusion, she stooped to take it from her pocket. She shook it out hastily, feeling Adams waiting for her. With a start of horror she realized she was shaking a long white stocking in front of her. In an agony of embarrassment she tried to



snatch it back, glancing round to see if people had noticed.

A loud guffaw of laughter came from Adams, at her side. In her agitation, she could not get the stocking into her pocket. The foot hung out. Then she dropped the thing on the floor. The place had all gone red and blurred to her. The people were tittering.

Sam Adams, laughing outright, picked up the fallen stocking, and held it at arm's length. There was a shout of laughter down the room. Elsie stood crimson with shame, her lower lip between her teeth.

Then all at once Whiston jumped from his place, snatched the stocking from the hand of Adams, who started back. But the other took no notice of him.

"Come away here!" he said to Elsie, nodding his head in the direction of the door.

She was so ashamed, she did not know how she got out of the room.

"Which are your things?" asked Whiston of her, roughly, in the cloak-room, and in a few moments the two were hurrying down the park. She clung to his arm, and felt that if he were not there to protect her she would die.

They had married shortly afterward, when Whiston had got another job. There had been one child, which had died.

### III

BUT this was all two years before. Elsie had had time to get used to her husband, and to take him for granted, as one takes the air one breathes. Inside the marriage she found her real liberty. She need not be afraid now. And so her carelessness led her into risks. She had plenty of vitality, and nothing vital to do. Whiston was away for ten hours a day, and liked to be quiet when he did come home. Therefore, when Sam Adams seemed to take up the old thread of adoration for her—well, it was exciting.

She had met him once or twice in the streets, and chatted with him. She felt she knew a lot more about men, now she

was married. And he was really jolly, and said most flattering things. Of course she took them for what they were worth—but still—

Now he had sent her the earrings. They gave her joy. Therefore she would keep them—why not?

In the afternoon, out of sheer mischief, and because she had nothing to do, she went downtown at about the time when Sam Adams usually came out of the warehouse, and she hung about, wearing her earrings. At last she saw him and his nephew. They took off their hats to her. Sam Adams came up.

"How are you?" he asked. "Had many valentines?"

"One or two," she answered.

"Nice ones, I hope?"

"Nice and nasty, mixed."

"I see. And the nasty ones you threw away, and the nice ones you kept."

"That's it."

"For the sender's sake?"

"Oh, I don't know who the senders are."

"Not a notion?"

"Not the faintest notion."

The elder man winked at her, and felt he was being very cunning in feminine duplicity.

"Still, you like what was in 'em?"

"Oh, very much." And she shook her earrings out of pure mischief.

"That's good—always show gratitude, eh?"

"I hope so."

He, florid and facile, stood near her and seemed to dominate her. Suddenly she felt a strong aversion to him. She was afraid. He seemed to have got some sort of mastery. Hastily she took her leave. But he still seemed master. As she went home, her heart grew heavy, she was depressed. She felt as if her life were worth nothing. Everything was wrong. She took off her earrings, put on her pinafore and began to cook the evening meal. But she had no heart for the job.

Whiston came home, pale and rather tired. He, too, seemed depressed. Neither had the energy to cheer the other. She sat in her pinafore and ate a dreary meal.



"You aren't very entertaining," she said to him.

"No," he answered, and said no more. It always made her angry with him when he seemed short of words. She began to hum and sing a snatch of song, out of pure irritation. And she rose, even before he had finished eating, to clear the table. He looked, but said nothing. So she began to wash up the pots. As a rule she left them till morning, so that she should have the evening with her husband. He drew up by the kitchen fire and sat smoking and staring in front of him. She resented it bitterly, because it made her feel in the wrong. At last she came and sat down.

She could tell he was in a state of suppressed irritation. The veins stood out on the back of his hands. His shirt cuffs were rather dirty.

"What did you do with that white stocking?" he asked.

"Put it in the drawer."

He puffed in silence, slow and masculine and pondering.

"An' what're yer goin' ter do wi' it?"

"Wear it. I've got a pair now, with that of last year. I *must* see if they fit me."

And straightaway she ran upstairs. A flame of rage went through her husband. It was as though a dull, heavy fire were ready to burst into blaze inside him. He sat suppressing this fire, smoking, not moving.

She came down again in a few moments.

"Beautifully!" she said, just to anger him.

Then she came and stood in front of him, holding up her skirt. She wore gray shoes. He glanced quickly at her, then stared resolutely away again.

"Don't they fit me?" she asked.

But he would not answer. So she danced a jig round the room, flinging up her white-stockinged ankles.

"Sit down, and don't be a fool," he said, harshly, with contempt.

"Is *that* all you've got to say to me?" she retorted. Nevertheless she was hurt by his tone. It took all the spring out of her. She sat down opposite him, drawing up her skirts from her white ankles.

They were very pretty, and he loved them very much. But he was angry with her; it hurt him to see her ankles.

"Do you mean to say you're wearin' a pair of stockings as Sam Adams sent you?" he asked, using an uncouth pronunciation.

"Why not?" she replied.

This naïve question made the anger flame up in his breast till he could scarcely breathe. It was some moments before he answered.

"Are they his stockings?" he asked.

"They're the stockings I got as valentines—I don't know *who* sent them."

"Don't yer? Have yer seen him lately?"

"I saw him today."

She heard that he spoke with difficulty, forcing the words out of a suffocated chest, when he asked:

"To speak to?"

"He came and spoke to me."

Now she was getting afraid. Her heart began to quiver.

"What about?"

"He asked me if I'd had any valentines."

His face flushed dark. Now his eyes were fixed on her, eyes with big pupils, full of hate, watching her. She was afraid, yet she exulted.

"An' what else?"

She felt his voice in judgment on her, and it thrilled her with joy. She felt perverse altogether.

"Oh, nothing. He only asked me if I'd wear them for the sender's sake."

His face slowly contracted into a kind of grin. Now she was really afraid. She did not know this still, grinning man. His voice seemed to come out of him without his producing it, bitter, toneless.

"Ah—he did!"

There was silence. She wished he would move or say something. It was for him to get them both out of the situation. But he sat stiff and still. She went weary. Would she have to lie, or make mock? She had got in a mess. Very well, it was his fault; he should look after her.

"And why *are* you wearing them—just to rile me?"



The question came simply and pathetically. She could not answer. She twisted in her chair.

"It's *not* because you care for Sam Adams—" He said it hotly, and with assurance. She knew it was true, and yet she felt like equivocating. He was going to corner her with logic instead of with love.

"For the man is objectionable to you. Are you caught by his money—because he's a swell—or what?"

This made her very angry. Perhaps it was where she despised herself.

"I don't see that he's so bad," she retorted flippantly.

He was silent for a little while, watching her.

"Oh, don't you—that bald swine, who leaves none of his warehouse girls alone—if he can get a chance—"

"How do *you* know? He's not so bad, at all."

"Bad—he's worse than bad."

"How do *you* know?" she asked.

This made him angry. The flame came up again in his breast, almost destroying his self-control. He felt mad against her.

"Do you mean to say you want to carry on with him?" he asked.

This made her angry. Why would he force her through these questions? He ought to know she didn't want anything to do with Sam Adams. But he should keep her himself, then. She would not answer.

"Do you mean you do?" he asked, with a curious wakefulness in his voice. His eyes were fixed on her. As if they were two strong lights, she could not meet them.

"What do you mean, carrying on?" she replied, raising her head with mock cool superiority. He was turning cold with hate. There was a curious snarl on his lip.

She felt herself going stiff and hard.

Presently, afraid lest he should get hold of her and hurt her, he rose slowly and went out of doors, up the steps into the little garden, into the night. Far away, below, the lights of the town in the hollow fumed and burned. But his

heart was black with rage and hate; nothing could affect him. He leaned against the fence of the little upraised garden, feeling stiff with black, murderous rage.

She was angry and insulted. Why had he chosen this way of getting out of it?

If only he had loved her a little, she would have told him, and thrown away the other business gladly. But he gave her no chance. He gave her no chance—off he went straightaway into his insult and contempt. No, she was furious; she hated him. And yet, at the bottom of her heart, she dreaded the mischief she might have done. What if—

At last she rose to go and look for him. He saw her come out of the door and stand in the little yard below, looking round. She could not see him up there in the dark. She went round to the gate. He saw the twinkle of her white stockings. She disappeared. Presently she returned, looking.

"Ted!" she called, very softly. "Ted!"

He could not answer, his heart was set so stubbornly. She went faltering indoors. Then he was sorry for her. But still he felt as if he were paralyzed, and could not move. Again he remembered her faltering, the movement of her white ankles.

Slowly he went down and into the house. She looked up, frightened and shrinking, as he entered. His face was very pale, his eyes looked black. It shocked her. She was afraid of the power of his feelings. It even destroyed her pity. She felt impersonal.

But he made a pleading movement toward her. He could not bear it when she shrank from him. Taking courage, she went to him. He held her fast against his breast, so fast, she could not move, and was afraid. He did not say anything, but stood quite rigid, with a curious fine tremor in his body, holding her fast. She could not quite understand, and was afraid and unsure. She did not trust these high pitches of emotion.

Again, making an effort, she put her



arms round his neck and drew down his head, kissing him.

"My love, my love!" she murmured.

He only trembled more, and held her faster, and did not speak. A little wonder woke in her heart. "How he clings to me, as if he needed me!" A new fear came up in her, fear of what she herself might represent to him.

"My love!" she whispered in a little ecstasy. "My love!"

And she clung to him trembling.

"I love you," she whispered to him.

And she felt the powerful vibration of her husband's body, as he pressed her to him, clinging to her. He did not say anything. She felt rather stunned,

rather bewildered, rather afraid of this intensity of feeling. Why wouldn't he say something, so that she could understand, something she could hold on to afterward? What was she to think of this feeling of his, that frightened her? Here he did nothing but bury his head against her and cling to her, pressing her so she could never escape any more.

But she loved him. Oh, down in the very kernel of her, she loved him. It had never gone so deep before. She was glad. It made her feel so much bigger.

Next day she sent back both stockings and earrings. She never told her husband about the latter.



## THE LITTLE INN AT DROMEHAIRE

By Clinton Scollard

DEAR little inn at Dromehaire,  
 Oh, would today that I were there!  
 The honeysuckle round the panes,  
 The pinks beside the garden walks,  
 And, gold as sunshine after rains,  
 The lilies on the lily stalks!

Dear little inn at Dromehaire,  
 Oh, would today that I were there  
 With, just across the table, you,  
 Smiling in your beguiling way,  
 Your cheeks like roses fresh with dew,  
 Your eyes like violets in May!

*Ah, sweet the savor of the fare,  
 Dear little inn at Dromehaire!*



OUR sins are sure to find us out—but they have an unpleasant habit of calling again.



ONE half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives, nor even why.



# THE GODDESS QUEEN

By Sarath Kumar Ghosh

FOR three days and three nights there had been silence in the palace of Vikrampur, where Rani Delini's husband lay sick unto death. The Rani herself, with dry eye and clenched hands, watched by her husband's bedside. The daughter of forty belted queens—some of whom had done battle for husband or lover with sword and lance, yea, astride his corpse—she had vowed to fulfill the noblest traditions of her race.

Her husband had been all to her. All too short had been their wedded bliss—scarce three years; and she was not yet twenty. He had been a fit mate and worthy lover. When she was eight and he twelve, they had been playmates; and their hearts had been bound together with the skipping rope. And since their marriage, and after her parents' death, all her love had been concentrated upon her husband.

She still had one of her own flesh and blood to love, her brother; Pertab and she had been each other's comfort in the first days after their parents' death. But since her marriage she had not seen her brother. Rajah Pertab of Pertabpur, on succeeding to his throne, had visited England—and in two years there had become more English than the English themselves. He had erected factories, brought water to his capital fifty miles across the country from a tributary of the Ganges, organized a fire brigade, and even introduced motor cars in lieu of the gorgeous cavalcades of the past.

Since his return from England he had not found time from affairs of state to visit Rani Delini at Vikrampur. Not that he loved his sister less, but that he thought he loved his duty more. Vik-

rampur was two hundred miles away, without a railroad. These six moons he had planned a dozen times to go; he merely deferred the visit the dozen times—yearning much to go, yet arguing more to stay.

And now came the sudden illness of Rajah Vikram. For these three days and nights he hovered between life and death amid the silent weeping of the palace. Then, on the morning of the fourth, at the second watch, a wail arose among the waiting maids.

The *jemadar* of the palace dashed to the guardroom at the outer gate.

"The fleetest horse and the hardest rider," he commanded.

To the chosen horseman he handed a message. "To the nearest telegraph office," he said. "Spare not thyself, nor thy horse."

The horseman rode hard, urging the flagging steed. The nearest office was fifteen miles away. There he dropped from the horse, and silently handed the message to the clerk. The clerk, reading it, pressed it to his brow in silence.

Five minutes later the message reached the telegraph office in Pertabpur State nearest the palace. Even then it was thirty-three miles away—a postal and telegraph office combined.

The receiving clerk had no horseman, only postal runners. He said to the swiftest: "Canst take this to the palace? It concerns the Master. A white message."

"Twenty-four miles at a run is my daily duty, twelve going and twelve returning," the postal runner replied. "But if it concerns the Master, and is a white message, I can but try."

"If thou dost fall and die, entrust



the message first to some Gandharva—some celestial messenger—or his earthly proxy.”

With that admonition the runner hastened. Daily, with a small packet of express letters specially written on the lightest paper, he had done the twenty-four miles; now he urged on beyond that limit. But, accustomed only to the twenty-four, the sudden change told on him with increasing force at each additional mile.

With bloodshot eyes he beheld the marble cupolas of Pertabpur shining in the sun—seven miles away. His tongue was dry; but there was no water nigh. He spurred on his flagging strength, counting each mile from the landmarks. He had gained two miles over the twenty-four; could he hold out for the seven more?

Should he run with less speed? But then, though he might reach the goal, it might be too late—and a few minutes might make void his whole effort. With that thought he denied himself, and urged on.

Then, as he felt the strain on his heart, a fear came upon him: what if he failed to reach the goal, and fell short by a mile—yea, less—just the span to hand the message to some other bearer?

Six miles more. His tongue was withered now and like a horn. It was just past noonday, and the heat was great. He glanced as he ran, to right, to left, but kept to the roadway. Should he turn a little to the side across the fields, in the hope of finding water? But that itself would lessen his speed over the uneven ground. He denied himself again, and urged on.

Five miles more. A mist began to form before his eyes, and in it he saw visions. As a drowning man sees a panorama of his life in his last few moments of consciousness, in like manner he saw again his home in the village a hundred miles away, his parents, whose sole support he was, and little Lilava, his betrothed. A year more, and he would receive his pension; for postal runners served only between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. A year more, and he would marry. What though he might

live but fifteen years more with his beloved, and die at forty like all postal runners? That would be bliss enough. He schemed what he would do. . . .

A film began to form before his glazing eyes; and in it the vision of Pertabpur's cupolas seemed to be blurred. He felt a sudden constriction at his heart as he made a bigger stride, half a leap, over a fallen bough. *Hè Bhugwan*—was this the beginning of the end? Should he fail—and all this torture be made void? Nay, not the torture—that was in his *karma*—but should he strive so far, and yet fail in his master's cause? *Bhugwan*—was this thy mercy?

He had blasphemed! He had blasphemed! Brahma, forgive him!

But one mile more! All unconsciously he must have run on and on! There were the cupolas; there the Lion Gate—as precious as the gate of Heaven—and there the citadel of the palace! One mile more, and his task was over!

With that thought he made his last spurt. A little more agony, he recked not; a little more forfeit of his future life, he counted nothing. He thought only of the vision of the goal before him, his duty done. . . .

And then, and then, cruel, mocking Fate had had his sport. The cupolas receded suddenly before his gaze—the palace citadel, the gate of Heaven. He saw, instead, where he had gazed, fleeting clouds.

A mirage! A mirage! Pertabpur was still three miles away. He cursed Fate.

Vision failed him. He ran on like a blind man. Then one by one his other senses began to weaken. A newer fear surged up in his heart: what though he reached the goal with his ebbing life, met someone who might relieve him of his burden—but fell down in swoon or death, bereft of speech, of the word to explain the message?

Suddenly his knees came together with a knock. He fell, not prone, at full length, but as an ox is felled—in a huddled heap, his face striking the earth. He staggered up, seeing nothing; but now there was a buzzing sound in his ear. A minute more, and he fell again—and arose. Thus three times. . . .



A trooper of the outer guard was returning to his post. He heard the jingling bells at the runner's waist; but the jingling was not in rhythmic time, as every villager in India hears when the postal runner passes by, fresh and strong. Instead, it was spasmodic and in jerks. The trooper turned. Something struck him as unwonted. He came on at full gallop.

Haggard and emaciated, with deep furrows upon his brow and cheeks, the runner opened his glazing eyes, struggled on again, held out the telegram and fell in a huddled heap. He tried to speak, but speech was denied him. The trooper gazed at the envelope, for he could not read.

"The Master," the runner said—and at the supreme effort blood gushed up to his mouth. "Leave me—to die! Hasten—show white!"

The trooper drew his sword, slashed a yard off his waistband and thrust it over the head of his lance. Then he galloped.

From the watch tower of the citadel the sentinel espied the hastening horseman, and gave the signal. Lachman, the controller of the palace, came himself.

"What sign?" he asked.

"White!" the sentinel answered.

"Tidings of sorrow!" Lachman came to the gate and received the telegram. Reading it, as was his duty, he pressed it to his brow. "Tidings of sorrow must not reach him without my preparation." Saying that, he hastened into the palace. But already the white sign had been seen; a whisper passed through the corridors.

In the council chamber, all oblivious, Rajah Pertab was closeted with the British Resident and the High Priest. Lord Mellor had been his personal friend in London; but equally the High Priest had been his *guru* and Delini's from childhood: spiritual guide and teacher and confessor. And now Lord Mellor was urging British schemes and social reforms—and the High Priest was opposing them.

"And the Viceroy invites you to Delhi as his guest," the Resident concluded. Which the High Priest feared.

The curtains parted, and Lachman entered. Through the gap Pertab caught a glimpse of anxious faces in the corridor. The sound of a conch shell arose in the inner palace, then the voices of the maidens of the palace in unison—the death chant.

A sudden apprehension surged up in Rajah Pertab's heart.

"Heaven-born," Lachman said with quivering lips, "prepare thy heart! I bear tidings!"

"Speak!"—the word escaped Pertab's lips. In that moment he was not Rajah, but man. And he felt the world falling around him.

"Brahma comfort thee! Rani Delini is a widow. She mounts to Heaven with her husband in Agni's fiery chariot—to-night."

Pertab was stunned by the sudden blow. All the love of years for his sister surged up in his heart—and his seeming neglect of these months.

"Delini to be a suttee!"

Mellor interposed. "You need not go to Delhi now. Go to her rescue instead!"

"No!" the High Priest answered. "Neither Delhi, nor Delini!"

The Resident came to Pertab on his right. "Will you forget your English ideals? Will you let her perish—and raise not a hand to save her?"

The High Priest came to Pertab on his left. "Wouldst scandalize thy subjects?"

Pertab was torn in anguish. "Must she die tonight? I have not seen her since her bridal day; shall I never see her again?"

"Your sole relative!" Mellor added.

"Wouldst deny thy most sacred belief?" the High Priest cried. "Thou shalt see Delini in a new incarnation!"

Pertab turned on his *guru*. "Wouldst make faith a barren profession, without humanity, without love? Am I of wood, bereft of senses, emotions, love? Have I lost my human heart, crushed it, trampled upon it? I *will* see Delini in this life!"

"Beware!" The High Priest held up his right hand. "Wouldst interpose between her and her martyrdom?"



Pertab flung down his arms helplessly. He was sorely hit. "Her martyrdom!"

A conflict was raging within him, in which none could intervene: an eternal issue, between him and his conscience. An issue whose *karma* would affect him and Delini from incarnation to incarnation. Yea, the *karma* would be relentless in earthly things, and in his very guardianship of his people. For it was the conflict of the ideals of the West and of the East within him.

Then a terrible thought leaped to being. "Does she go to her martyrdom willingly—or thrust into it by the priesthood?"

He turned to Lachman. "Answer me! Is it of her own choice?" But Lachman was silent, for the telegram stated nothing on this point.

"Answer me—is it of her own choice?" But Lachman was still silent.

"Then I shall snatch her from death!"

Thus Pertab went to his sister's rescue. He chose his swiftest motor car; the chauffeur a mechanician from Bombay. He took Lachman and all things that might be needed. None other knew of his mission, for he would not needlessly scandalize his subjects, succeed or fail. It was then two o'clock in the afternoon, and owing to the long preliminaries the final obsequies could not be before eight. Six hours to cover the two hundred miles, to arrive at the utmost limit of time!

There was only one high road, and it varied in condition. For the first portion from Pertabpur it was the path the postal runner had taken. Pertab saw something glistening on the road, something metallic, but small. The chauffeur, fearful of his tires, slackened speed to pass around it: he could not risk passing it between the wheels, because there seemed to be a little hollow just there.

Pertab looked over the side as the car passed it, and saw the glistening object to be a little brass bell, battered; and the mud all around it was pressed down, as if something had fallen there in a heap—and at its edge the imprint of a man's face.

Then the ruler thought of the humble ones that served him.

"Lachman," he suddenly asked—and

his conscience smote him—"hast seen to the messenger?"

"He is at the outpost. The guard and a physician from the palace are tending him."

"Will he live?"

"They know not yet."

In silence Pertab sat. Life for life, would Fate gamble with him? The true Hindoo sees signs and omens, however English he may become. Had he deserved well of Fate, to arrive in time—or would he be mocked with failure at the very end?

There were dangers in the narrow road; two swift vehicles could scarcely pass each other. Among the rugs and cloaks in the car was a rich crimson *choga*, almost fire red in hue. Worn by someone in the car, it might serve as a danger signal—in British territory. But the conventions were different here, and the sign of fire red would not slacken the speed of opposing vehicles. Yet, in vain hope that some at least might understand, Pertab himself wore the cloak.

Toward sunset they entered Vikrampur State, and soon after met a cavalcade medieval in style and garb. The cavaliers caught a glimpse of the red-robed form as the car passed—and took that as an omen of the chariot of the Fire God. Or was it not a mere omen, but the Fire God himself?

It was now six, and the February night came on with sudden swiftness. Fifty miles more! They had gained—they had gained!

But the darkness grew, and the headlights showed but a hundred yards ahead.

"The chant!" Pertab cried to Lachman in an agony of fear, thinking of possible villagers, in lumbering carts, returning from the day's work.

"*Hari bole—Hari bole!*" the faithful Lachman chanted.

It was not the actual words but the rhythm and intonation of the death chant that carried. The drowsy cartmen heard it from afar off, and lined up on the grass, marveling, as the car shot past, at this swift messenger of death.

But still the speed had to be slackened as the darkness grew impenetrable; for



there were no road lights to indicate by their alignment the coming curves. Pertab possessed his soul in patience; he could do naught else. But at half the remaining distance hope began to leave him. It was already the hour for the procession to begin. . . .

The place of cremation at Vikrampur was a mile beyond the city. The populace began to line the route from early afternoon. It was to be the first suttee in the State after fifty years. Among the poor suttee was scarcely possible, and among the great was very rare. It was practised only when a woman of exalted rank resolved to die with her husband, and then only in the State of a rajah whose treaty with the British ensured his internal independence. The wives of the previous rulers of Vikrampur for the fifty years had not so resolved. But now Rani Delini!

The last half-mile of the route of the procession in Vikrampur was a broad avenue of trees; there none were permitted to enter save the suppliants: the deaf and dumb, the sick and dying, and all that suffered human woes. They were coming, or were brought, from all places; and their progress was slow. Lastly came a blind man and a cripple; partners in woe, who had daily begged in the city.

"Rest thy arms upon my shoulders," the blind man said to the cripple. "I shall be thy limbs."

"And I shall be thine eyes," the cripple answered.

Thus they came slowly all the way, and joined the other suppliants.

"Way for the blind—way for the blind!" they cried, and the others made way for them.

Then the darkness of night overtook them all, while yet they had not reached the avenue. Their fear was great, lest the procession should overtake them before each had found a place.

"To me night is day and day is night," the blind man said. "Fear not; follow me."

He led the suppliants, and found a suitable place for each, ten cubits apart, so that each would have that space for his supplication. The blind man and the

cripple returned to the beginning of the avenue; but now the cripple had a tree to cling to at the supreme moment.

At the end of the avenue was the pyre, flanked by the forest behind and on either side, the front alone being open, like a nave: the pyre, the altar. The pyre of sandalwood, steeped in sacred oils, was four cubits high and eight square, and lined above with soft cushions. A flight of steps, also of sandalwood, was in front of the pyre.

The procession was headed by a column of torch bearers, then a body of priests, followed by the dead Rajah: the bier borne on the shoulders of eight men. A gap of three lance lengths, and then the chief priest with two assistants. Immediately behind them appeared a column of forty men, two deep; they wore long saffron robes, and stooped in reverence. For they drew the car that bore Rani Delini.

In robe of white and with loosened hair, she stood upon the car, motionless, her hands joined at her breast, gazing before her, yet seeing nothing. Her face was unveiled.

The multitude saw the car from afar, and loosened their tongues in the frenzy of exaltation.

"The Devi! The Devi! Behold the Devi!"

Then, as the car approached, the chief priest intoned:

*"Sach-chita-nandal Sach-chita-nandal*  
Soul of Savitri, heart of Sita, be sanctified, be glorified!"

*"Sach-chita-nandal Sach-chita-nandal"* the assistant priests responded.

"It lives, it lives—the Flame Divine—in thee, O Devi!"

*"Sach-chita-nandal Sach-chita-nandal"*

The multitude prostrated themselves as the car passed. Then, rising, they shouted again to the heavens:

"The Devi! The Devi! Behold the Devi!"

And then, after the frenzy of exaltation, a deep hush fell upon them all, and the priests ceased their chant. For it was the turn of the suppliants—and their wails and moans and cries of woe to the goddess.



"Cure! Cure! Cure!"

The car neared the first suppliant, the blind man, and paused. He held up his arms and wailed:

"Give me my sight, O Devi; give me my sight!"

The car neared the second suppliant, the cripple, and paused. He clung to the tree, and wailed:

"Give me my limbs, O Goddess; give me my limbs!"

The car neared the third suppliant, and paused a little longer. She was a woman who had lost her only child that day. She held up the body, now cold, in her arms.

"Put life into it, O merciful Goddess; put life into it for my last comfort!"

Thus before all the suppliants the car paused and passed.

Arrived at the pyre, the priests laid the dead Rajah upon the cushions. Rani Delini descended from the car and came to the pyre. At the foot of the steps, the altar of her sacrifice, the chief priest approached and knelt at her feet; for she was the celebrant, he and all others the votaries. Still kneeling, he handed to her a goblet of virgin gold.

She took the goblet. Her lips moved in prayer.

The exaltation was past, and the sustaining cry of the multitude—the frenzy, the adoration. Instead, there stood at the foot of the pyre a young girl scarcely out of her teens. Leaving her at the altar, the chief priest withdrew to his brethren, ten cubits from the pyre. There they stood in rows, the torch bearers grouped behind them; and the ruddy glow from the torches seemed but to deepen the gloom in the forest around. All watched amid the silence, the chief priest holding the kindling torch.

Strengthened, Rani Delini raised the goblet.

"Come to my lips, sweet nectar of heaven! I drink to my earthly oblivion and eternal awakening!"

She drained the cup, mounted the pyre and laid herself beside her husband. The chief priest applied the torch to the foot of the steps first, as a symbol that the sacrifice was now irrevocable. He

returned to his brethren, and all the priests knelt down and began the chant anew:

*"Sach-chita-nanda! Sach-chita-nanda!"*

A thick black column of smoke shot up from the sandalwood steps steeped in oils. Soon a tongue of flame licked the pyre itself, and the fire spread: on either side of the steps and along the front of the pyre, then inward. Thus the columns of smoke burst forth first in front of the pyre.

In ecstasy now, the priests chanted, and as the ecstasy grew, they knocked their brows upon the ground that the goddess had trodden. And from afar off the suppliants and the multitude responded.

Suddenly a priest happened to glance up. Behind the curling column of smoke and flame he caught a glimpse of something unwonted. He gazed in doubt, then wonder, then frenzy of exaltation.

"A miracle! A miracle!"—the awed whisper passed.

"The Fire God!"

They caught a glimpse of a fire red mantle, between the flames. Some saw the Fire God raise up Rani Delini's insensible form—to mount to heaven in his chariot. That the Fire God would invisibly convey her soul to heaven the faithful knew, but not that he would deign to favor them with a visible vision. All lay prostrate upon their faces in adoration.

*"Sach-chita-nanda! Sach-chita-nanda!"*

In the third watch of the night, an hour before dawn, Rajah Pertab reached his palace. The sentry at the gate saluted, but saw. The Rajah leaned over, and commanded:

"Thou hast seen nothing! Dost understand?"

And the sentry closed his eyes, and said: "I have seen nothing, and see nothing. Brahma has stricken me blind!" And thenceforth he remained blind.

The car turned round by the women's wing of the palace. There the waiting maids were called to bear from the car



a draped form. And the waiting maids were discreet.

Daily for three days Rajah Pertab visited his sister in her apartments; she was conscious, but weak. Then on the fourth she regained her strength. But for three days more she withheld speech, even from her brother—especially from her brother.

Then after the week she broke silence—but not to thank her brother.

"My dead husband is calling me," she said to him. "His spirit follows me like a shadow by day, and stands beside me by night. 'Give me light, give me light'—I hear his cry, asleep or awake. I shall hesitate no more, but join him in Nirvana. Thus shall I release his soul from pain, and mine."

"Poor Delini! Thy sorrow has numbed thy reason!"

She turned on him. "I am not mad, but sane indeed. So sane that I shall accuse thee. Brother mine, thou hast unwittingly done me a grievous wrong. Is it thy fate to wrong unwittingly through thy very love?"

"Through—my—very—love! I protest it is untrue!"

"I had drunk the cup of oblivion, had passed through the conscious pains and perils of martyrdom for my dead husband's sake, and nothing remained but to enter paradise—when from the gate of heaven thou didst snatch me back and revive my senseless body with thy English drugs and medicines: I feel them still coursing through my veins, impregnating my blood! Of that I accuse thee! Now have I proved my sanity?"

Pertab was silent, and found not a word to answer. She softened.

"But I forgive thee, brother mine. I have launched my bark upon the bosom of the deep, come what may. Farewell—farewell—farewell!"

That night, the first dark night of the new moon, a fire broke out in a detached storehouse adjacent to a wing of the *zenana*. It contained cereals, oils and firewood—so that it burnt furiously, and the fire brigade could do no more than limit the conflagration to the storehouse. It was all in ashes by daybreak.

When the scared waiting maids had recovered from their fright, they brought word to Rajah Pertab. His sister had vanished in the night. But it was strange that she had taken nothing with her save the white robe she wore, even had she gone on a pilgrimage.

Yet, on closer search, one thing was found missing: a dagger from the armory. It was a cherished relic; the battle dagger of a hero of the past; his queen had used it to join him in Nirvana.

In the search none thought of looking for a lump of melted steel amid the smoldering ashes of the conflagration—now being swept away by the full force of water from the fire brigade.

"Ganges water!" a waiting maid cried, gifted with more perception. "Be tender, brothers, be tender! Mingle the water well with the ashes—and consecrate them for the hands of unseen angels to gather!"

Thus in travail and tears Rajah Pertab learnt his lesson. He could alter India externally in a few years, but not her ideals. Perchance some of them were noble, needing but a new application.



WIFEY—You must take your old shoes to throw at the bride and groom.  
HUBBY—What shall I wear back?



THE woman who will tell her age will tell anything. Avoid her.



# MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM

By Charles Irvin Junkin

O H, what is this? So round and small,  
I hold it in my hand;  
A trifling thing, a tiny ball,  
A very grain of sand!  
Why, that, my friend, is medicine,  
Prescribed with matchless skill,  
A mighty pellet, sugar-bound;  
Why, that's the Doctor's Pill!

And what is this? Rotund and great,  
Too large for me to hold;  
Proportioned like a fat balloon,  
And glittering with gold!  
Why, that, my friend, you cannot hold,  
As you will surely see;  
That goodly lump is outward bound,  
For that's the Doctor's Fee!

And what is this colossal thing  
That fills my soul with awe,  
Stupendous in its ample girth,  
A monster in the raw?  
Why, that is plain dynamic force,  
And plenty in reserve,  
The puissant will that sends the bill—  
Why, that's the Doctor's Nerve!



IT is absolutely useless to try to talk politics to a fellow who was married only a week ago.



LATE hours make early graves.



IT often takes more patience to live happily with a faithful husband than with an unfaithful one.



# ON THE DOG WATCH

By William R. Lighton

I'VE had a plenty. The next man may have the rest. No, it's no use coaxing me to take any more. I'm through, I tell you. I am certainly most completely and entirely through.

I told Old Jonesy so last night, when I turned in my story of the wedding. I was all alone when I wrote it, back in the dingy city room at two o'clock in the morning, long after everybody else in the bunch had gone home. I wasn't feeling much like doing a joy story, but I batted it off, jerked the last sheet out of my machine, dog's-eared the pages together and carried the stuff in and slammed it down on Jonesy's desk.

"There," says I, "that's the last for me. I know when I've had enough. You may turn the job over to somebody who'll relish this sort of thing. I'm nobody's jackass, and I don't care who knows it."

Jonesy looked at me over the top of his eyeglasses, solemn as a big, fat, stuffed owl—the way he always looks when he's going to shoot off one of those nasty speeches he thinks are witty.

"Really, Teddy?" says he. "Then why don't you practise restraining your bray? It's awfully misleading."

I hate that man. Fat never did agree with me. It doesn't set well on my stomach when I eat it, and it doesn't set well on my mind when I look at it. Old Jonesy has half a barrellful of it on him, and every ounce is in plain sight. He bulges with it in the middle; his wide trousers are stuffed full of it all the way down; his big shoulders are padded with it three inches thick. His nose is nothing but a round, fat wad; his eyes look at you out of a couple of deep, fat pits. He irritates me when he's

decently dressed; but on a sultry July night, with his coat off and his neck all unbuttoned and his sleeves rolled up to the elbow and the light shining on the top of his fat, bald head, he's insufferable. That's the way he was last night.

My temper had been rising ever since the wedding at midnight.

"What's that?" says I. "My bray? Say that again, will you?"

Jonesy gave one of his greasy chuckles. "Circumstantial evidence has hanged many a man, Teddy," says he, and began to pat his fat hands on the arms of his chair. "Anyway, you came perilously close to playing the jackass with Miss Angel de Vinne, now didn't you? Come, come, Teddy!" says he. "What's the use of all this agony, just because you don't happen to be the happy bridegroom? It's hard, of course; but just think how the poor blacksmith would feel if he'd lost out. He hasn't your cheerful philosophy to sustain him, you know. Blacksmiths are such rude, common persons."

This Angel de Vinne business started just a week ago last Friday night. On the night when the thing began, at half past three, the big press upstairs had just started to rumble and grumble over the carriers' city edition. With a copy in his hand, Jonesy had waddled away, and I'd been left alone to finish out the rest of the lonesome night. My job seemed hopelessly dull and stupid. I never could see, anyway, what this dog watch is for. It's a fool theory that when the day's work is all cleaned up and the last soul has piked off to bed and gray dreariness has settled over the world, somebody has to hang around and wait, in case of devastating fire or



bloody murder or sudden death. There's nothing in it. Nothing ever does happen on the dog watch; there's not a spark of glory in it in a hundred years. Down at the foot of the stairs, where you turn in from the street, somebody stopped on the walk, and then I heard a heavy clump-clump-clump coming up—just the sort of noise you'd expect from a pair of feet belonging to a policeman named Murphy. There are some sounds you can't mistake. I was perfectly sure it was Murphy coming, even before I'd caught the first burr of his brogue.

"But why is Murphy wearing a silk petticoat?" says I to myself—I being sleepy and confused. "And why is he talking to himself?" I could hear Murphy saying, in rich police department English: "Take it aisy, now. What's th' r-rush? Th' chances are he's gahn home, annyhow."

The silky rustle was the only answer I caught until the footfalls reached the top of the stairs and paused in the dim lit hall. Then a girl's voice spoke—a poor, frightened little voice, but wonderfully velvet soft and rich. This made me prick up my ears and listen.

"Oh, he must be here!" says the voice.

Murphy gave an uneasy laugh. "Have it yer own way," says he. "I'm not wan t' dispute a lady's wor-rd. But he's gahn home, ahl th' same."

"Oh, dear!" The frightened note in the voice was trembling into despair. "What in the world shall I do?"

"Wait a bit, now," says Murphy. "Wait a bit. There's a light down th' hahl. Let's go see who's there." And on came the heavy boots and the silky rustle toward the city room door.

"Hullo, kiddy," says Murphy to me. "Say, I'm lookin' fer yer ould mahn. He ain't here, is he?"

"No, he ain't here," says I.

Murphy grunted and turned to speak over his shoulder into the dark behind him. "I said so. Ye'll not find him here again till tomorry night. Ye'll have t' think o' somethin' else, girlie."

"Oh, oh!" says the scared little voice out of the gloom beyond, and the sound was pathetically midway between a sigh and a sob. Then Murphy came am-

bling across the room to my desk, and behind him I caught a glimpse of her, clinging close to him, as if she found him at once a terror and a refuge.

She was just a scrap of a girl. Murphy could have concealed two or three like her behind him. But there was no hiding the quality of her. My word, she was a beauty, and the beauty was indescribably heightened by the child's air of fright that had possession of her. I couldn't do a thing but stand there and gasp and dumbly wonder how it happened that a being like that was going around in the first pale gray of dawn in tow of Policeman Murphy.

When I got back to the point of listening, this is what he was saying:

"An' so she says t' me t' bring her up here, on account of her knowin' th' ould mahn, an' he'd go bail for her if it was nicissary."

It struck me that I must have missed quite a lot of the explanation. "Bail?" says I. "Why, Murphy, what's the charge?"

He gave me a disgusted look. "Hark t' ye, now!" says he. "Ain't I just got done wid tellin' ye? It's fightin'."

"Fighting!" says I. "Fighting? This girl? You don't mean to say—"

He interrupted with a wide roll of his big head and a weary gesture. "Naw!" says he. "She wasn't doin' it herself, I tell ye—not th' scrappin'; but she was standin' by, aidin' an' abettin' them that was. Have I got t' tell it to ye ahl over again? Listen t' me, will ye? 'Twas down at Thirteenth an' Cosgrove streets, just a little bit ago. There was three of 'em—the two men an' her; an' them two byes was raisin' a disturbance I c'd hear two blocks off, about which wan of 'em was t' see her home. This gyurl screeched to 'em I was comin'; an' then they ahl started r-runnin'. She was th' only wan I c'd git howld of, me wind givin' out. She r-refused t' tell me who th' byes was, an' I mis-doubt she's kiddin' me about what she says her own name is. What was it ye said it was, little wan?"

"Angel de Vinne," says the girl, soft and low as a breath of night wind in springtime.



"Angel de Vinne!" says Murphy after her, in clumsy mockery. "Is it r-reasonable now, I ask ye—a name like that? But that's what she said it was. I was goin' t' take her wid me t' th' station for a bit of talk wid the sargint, till she coaxed me t' bring her up here, because she said Misther Jones c'd identify her an' fix it r-right about her appearance in case she'd be needed. An' now ye say he ain't here."

I slipped a quick look at the girl, and the glance she gave me in return threw a fit of inspiration into me. "Why, Murphy," says I, "I know the lady perfectly well. You've made an awful blunder. Miss de Vinne isn't the sort to be treated in this way at all."

"Oh!" says he. "So ye know th' lady yerself, do ye?"

"Why, certainly," says I. "I've known her a long time."

"Yes?" says Murphy. "Long enough, mebbe, so ye'd be willin' t' put up th' cash bond for her yerself?"

I did an instantaneous bit of thinking before I answered. I knew the department regulation. When they wanted to hold a witness for appearance in court in some fussy little case, they'd call for a ten-dollar deposit. What was more to the point, I recalled with a deep internal sigh of satisfaction that yesterday had been payday. With magnificent nonchalance I made a drag on my left hand pocket and chucked a bill across the desk. It surprised Murphy some, but he couldn't see anything the matter with the greenback, so he tucked it away in his clothes. "Ahl r-right!" says he, and ambled away with his helmet on the back of his head. And there was I with Angel standing demure and abashed before me, and with the heart of a true O'Rourke beginning to knock against my ribs.

"I hope I haven't offended you," says I with a sort of bold humility.

"Offended?" says Angel, in the softest murmur of that wonderful wind harp voice of hers. "Offended?"

"It was a reckless lie, my claim of intimate acquaintance," says I.

"I thank you for it," says Angel, very simply.

I grew bolder with that. "Anyway," says I, "I'm going to hope with all my heart it may turn out true."

She lowered her eyes with a schoolgirl modesty. I guessed she wasn't cross, though I didn't get a direct answer. "I must go," says she. "Will you please take me to a car?" And so we went out through the dark hallway. The obscurity and the unfamiliar footing brought her timidly close to my side. I put out my arm and steadied her against me to the head of the stairs and on down to the street.

"West, please, on this street," says she, in the faintest whisper, and we went over to the corner. It was a delicious wait till the next car came complaining up the grade. The day hadn't begun yet; nobody was astir; I had her all to myself.

"I must ask your name," says Angel presently. "I shall want to send you your money."

"My money?" says I. "Oh, blow the money!" Then in contrast to that noble sentiment came a second thought. "You mean you're going to forfeit the bond? You won't appear?"

"Oh, how can I?" says she; and the question left me curiously elate.

"My name is Theodore O'Rourke," says I. "I'm not giving it to you so you may write it on a cheque, but so you may know it. When am I to see you again? Tell me. I sha'n't let you go like this."

She looked at me then, shyly. "Ah, how can I tell?" says she. "Perhaps—" And then, in tremulous embarrassment: "Mr. O'Rourke, will you lend me a nickel? I haven't so much as car-fare."

I hunted up Murphy. I found him idling serenely along on his beat.

"Say, old man," says I, "you haven't reported that little matter to the sergeant yet?"

"No," says Murphy. "What's th' r-rush?"

"Well, see here," says I: "must you report it? The men got away from you, didn't they? You didn't catch anybody but that little girl. She's an awfully nice girl, Murphy. She's not that sort at all."



If you turn it in, she'll have to stand for it alone. Say, nobody saw, did they?"

Murphy's big hand was on my shoulder. "Ahl r-right, kiddy," says he; "I'll fergit it." When he turned away, he clean forgot all about my ten-dollar bill stuffed down in his pocket. But I wasn't kicking.

All day, I just mooned around. I had it very, very bad.

It was Jonesy who startled me out of it. I'd made three bad starts on my first story, and was slipping another sheet into the old machine when Jonesy came up behind me. I wasn't in the humor for noticing him. I hoped he'd go away and leave me alone; but after a minute he thrust his pudgy hand over my shoulder and laid on my desk a bright new ten-dollar bill and a shiny new nickel. Not a word from him. I jerked around to look at him, but he turned and waddled off to his little room up in front.

I followed along after him presently.

"Say, what about this?" says I. "You know her. Who is she, anyway?"

"I can't tell you much," says he. "Her name sounds French, doesn't it? And she carries a French sort of air about her. There's a note here somewhere, Teddy. I was near to forgetting."

He dug it out of his pocket and passed it over, an exquisite thing, creamy, elusive-scented. Eagerly I tore it open.

DEAR MR. O'ROURKE:

You were so kind. In my embarrassment I did not thank you enough or properly. Am I too bold in saying that I hope for another chance some time?

I may not ask you to call, and I may not tell you why; but whenever there comes a pleasant afternoon I like to go into Dietrich's Park, by the fountain, where it is cool. If you should ever find me there I might be able to say what I could not say last night of my gratitude.

ANGEL DE VINNE.

She was there ahead of me. I saw her the minute I turned the corner above the fountain, sitting on the rustic bench under that big tangle of wild grapevine. So far as signs went she didn't appear to be expecting me, for she had a magazine in her lap and was bending over it,

absorbed, with her hat put aside and the wind ruffling her beautiful hair. When she saw me her eyes were full of a mildly surprised wonder.

"Oh!" says she. "You came so soon?"

"Soon!" says I, with all the hot Irish in me rising. "You call this soon? Does it seem too soon to you?"

A delicious color came into her face and she turned away from me, putting up her little hand to brush a soft curl from her cheek. "No-o," says she. "No-o. Oh, I might as well be honest with you. I hoped you'd come today."

"Mr. O'Rourke," says she, by and by, "I wanted you to come. You were very good to me, and I wanted to thank you. You were kinder than you knew. But that's only part of what I want to say. I—I don't know how to say the rest so you will understand. You'll have to take a great deal for granted, because I can't be perfectly frank with you. I—Mr. O'Rourke, I'm in trouble. I can't tell you what it is, but I need your help. Will you help me?"

"Help you?" says I. "Why, girl, do you have to ask me? I'll take my hand off at the wrist if it'll do you any good. I'll take the heart out of my body. I'll—"

She gave a low, silvery laugh and laid her hand lightly on my arm. "It's not so serious as that," says she. "You'll think me foolish, maybe, for seeming to make so much of it, but it means everything to me. Tell me this: would you be willing, without any more explanation from me, to be seen with me in public sometimes?"

"Huh?" says I. She had me bothered, so she did. "Say that again. Would I be willing— Come, now, you're not fooling with me?" She shook her head slowly, seriously. "Would I be willing to be seen with you?" says I. "Say, would a man be willing to be seen in Paradise wearing a jeweled crown? Would he be willing—"

She stopped me, coloring vividly. "In the theaters?" says she. "And in a café, now and then, for supper? In places like that?"

I couldn't make head or tail out of it.



"Sure!" says I. "I'll go to the ends of the earth with you; you know I will."

"And you'll—oh, what will you think of me for asking it?—you'll try to seem—to seem—devoted to me?"

"Try?" says I. "Try to seem?" I had to shut my eyes up tight and drop my head on my hands to keep it from spinning round and round. "Oh, murder!" says I. "Go on. You've got me so I can't think."

"And you'll not let on to anybody that I asked it of you?" says she.

"Is it likely?" says I.

"And you'll do all this without knowing why I ask it?"

"Yes," says I. "Don't try to tell me a word. If you do I'll scream. When do we start? Tonight? I've got theater tickets. Let's make it tonight. Where shall I come for you?"

She considered for a minute, wrapt in her own thoughts. "Yes," says she, "tonight. And thank you. Only I can't let you come for me. I'll meet you at eight, at the corner where you put me on the car this morning. Will that do? And now you must tell me good-bye for this time."

My ten-dollar bill was badly moth-eaten by the time I got around to the meeting at eight. It wasn't my night off, and I had to lend that Pratt boy two dollars to get him to stay in my place. It took some more to negotiate the loan of a dress suit from a clothes shop, and I had to buy a dress shirt besides; and there were the flowers for Angel, a nifty bunch of roses, and several little odds and ends. I didn't care, though. I tell you I was a proud man when I marched with her down the aisle to our seats, shucked my coat and settled into my place, conscious of the rustle and stir we made. Not to mince plain English, the glowing beauty of that girl that night would have started a thrill of ecstasy in a convention of the gods. All over our part of the house I could see the fellows bending forward in their seats and twisting their necks around to get a glimpse of her. And there she sat, serenely unmindful of it all, attending to me, talking to me, listening to me, smiling at me. There was no blot on my content while

we sat waiting for the rise of the curtain.

I forget what the play was. It doesn't matter. Not at all. All I can remember is that there were four acts, and that at the end of the second I drilled out to the lobby and blew in a dollar for a little box of candied violets. I waited just long enough to take a couple of whiffs of a cigarette before I went back.

Mine was the aisle seat, eight rows back. As I drew near I was aware of somebody in my place. It was a large, square person; I might say very large and very square—square-shouldered, square-headed, square-jawed, with the general air of one whose strength was in daily use. He was close-lipped and scowling. He wasn't talking to Angel, nor paying any attention to her whatever; his hands were gripped tight on the chair arms and he was staring straight ahead of him, solid and motionless as a block of rough hewn stone.

I stood waiting a second or two for him to get up. He didn't stir. Then, "I beg pardon," says I. No answer; not a move, not a murmur; nothing but that stolid stare straight ahead. I tapped him on the shoulder. "I beg your pardon," says I, more distinctly; "may I have my seat?" I got only dead silence out of him; no other sign except that he seemed to settle a wee bit more firmly against the upholstery with his two hundred pounds of beef and bone. I was getting peeved. I pulled at his sleeve. "I must trouble you to get up," says I. He preserved the emotionless front of the historic tar baby in the pea patch. His big face had turned crimson as a turkey gobbler's and the sweat was standing in shining beads on his forehead, but aside from those tokens there wasn't the quiver of a nerve. The folks nearby were getting interested. Somebody snickered. The orchestra drew to a close for the next curtain. I glanced across at Angel inquiringly. She was rosy red with confusion, but I couldn't see that she was angered. Her glance went from me to the square person and back again, and she gently shook her head at me as though she was pleading



with me not to start anything. A ripple of amused laughter eddied around me. The house lights were switched off and the curtain started up. I snapped my teeth together, stuck my chin in the air and marched up the aisle and out to the street, mad and sore through and through.

## II

YES, sir, I was sore. On the street I headed west and set off on a swift walk, breathing hard and oozing rage at every pore. I wasn't going any place in particular—just walking. A mile out I suddenly realized that I had something gripped fast in my hand. It was my dollar box of candied violets. I hauled back and threw it as far as my strength would let me, into the middle of a deep weed patch across the street.

"She did it," says I. "She did it just to make a monkey of me." But somehow, when my temper mellowed a bit, that suspicion didn't seem to stand analysis. Why would she have done it? I couldn't make sense of that. By midnight my state of mind had settled to a dull grouchy sulk. I went to my room and changed my clothes and then went down to finish out the rest of the night at my job.

The first man I saw was old Jonesy sprawled out over his desk, and the first sound I heard, when Jonesy caught sight of me, was a great, fat, roaring "Haw-haw-haw!" that rattled everything that was loose in the room. It rattled me, too. My word, it hadn't occurred to me that the story would get around—not so soon, at any rate; but here it was ahead of me. There was no other explanation for Jonesy's uproarious conduct. He was enjoying himself immensely, gurgling, sputtering, choking, breaking out now and again in a burst of bellowing mirth. There was nothing for me to do but let him go on. I seemed to be past caring.

"Any assignments?" says I with frigid hauteur.

He wiped the oily tears from his fat cheeks and shook his head. "No," he burbled; "nothing doing. You might

dish up some short fillers, if you're able. Hop to it! Oh, ho-ho-ho!"

He came back to my desk after an hour or so, when the rest of the gang had quit for the night, and laid his thick hand on my shoulder. He'd sobered off by this time, though there was a stale after-flavor of his laughter lingering about him.

"Forgive me, Teddy," says he. "On the square, I didn't mean any offense. But you're such a headlong youngster." I preserved stoic silence, waiting. "See here," says he presently; "you don't happen to know who that chap was, do you?"

"No," says I with crisp brevity. He dropped into a chair, facing me across the desk.

"Well, listen," says he. "His name's Dan Mulcahy. He's a stranger in town." He sat studying me for a minute, the foolishness gone from his face, his forehead wrinkling with its professional frown. "Teddy," says he, "there's going to be a story in this. That's what it looks like—a corking human interest story. And there's a nice bit of mystery in it, too. I'll want you to do the story after a while, when it develops. You'll be fitter than anybody else on the staff. You know the girl, for one thing, and she's the heart and center of it all. I wish I could open up and tell you all I know about it now, but I've given my word, son. I can't tell you the whole inside of it till the time comes. All I can do is to put you next to a few scraps of fact." He pulled a cigar case from his hip pocket and spent a full minute in trimming a smoke and getting it to burning, scowling heavily all the while. "Are you game?" he asked at last abruptly.

"Go on," says I.

"Well," says he, "that Mulcahy man, now—what did you think of him?"

"Nothing," says I, chopping the word off short.

"He's part of the mystery," says Jonesy. "The girl, she blew into town three weeks or so ago. There's mystery about her, too—what you might call a case of dual personality—mighty interesting. She's revealed to you one



side of herself. There's another side, Teddy, just as interesting as the one you know. That's the side this man Mulcahy knows. He came to town a couple of days after she did. The fact is, he followed her. This is for your private ear: he's been a sore trial to her—on the side of her he knows. You've seen nothing in her but poise, have you—an admirable self-possession? That's not the way Mulcahy affects her, though. He gets on her nerves strangely—keeps her all wrought up, you know. He's got some sort of a hold over that side of her. I don't know how he does it, a man of his stamp. He's a blacksmith by trade; he's started a new shop out at Twentieth and Center. Works by day and haunts the girl of nights like a shadow. Mystery." He broke off for a time, peering at me through squinting lids. "Mystery," says he. "What he's after nobody knows. He's never revealed by a syllable what's in his mind, not even to her. He just dogs her around like a dumb fate, and that side of her doesn't seem able to resist the strange spell of the man. He's a perfect log of wood for silence. Whatever he's trying to do, he's been at it for months—long before he followed her here. See? Teddy, it strikes me there's a bully chance for you to do some fine work in sleuthing and unravel the tangle. Go at it, will you? You seem to stand pretty high with the girl. Keep it up, if you like, but don't lose sight of the story if it comes. Maybe I'll be at liberty to supply some facts if the thing's ever ready to be written. I know something of her inside history. Son, will you work at it some on faith?"

"M'mph!" says I. But I'll not deny that I was hooked; yes, sir, right plumb through the gills. From that minute my bright young genius was dedicated to the thing. From that minute I meant that that man Mulcahy should be my meat.

The next day was Sunday. I swore my sturdiest oath that I'd not go within a mile of that nook in Dietrich's Park that day. But of course I went, along in the middle of the afternoon; and then I spent the rest of the day chewing my

tongue and cursing my idiotic weakness. For there in her corner of the bench sat Angel; and there at the other end of the bench was the bulky blacksmith.

Nothing was going on between them. From a little distance it appeared to me killingly tame. Angel was nestled down with a book held before her eyes, giving her whole attention to it; and Mulcahy, a good six feet away from her, sat drooping over, his elbows on his knees, his chin in his outspread hands, the toe of his Sunday shoe idly playing with the gravel on the path. It must have been great sport. Presently, when it came time to turn over a leaf in her book, Angel glanced up and saw me in the middle distance, hovering at a standstill. A bright smile flashed over her face, and she gave me an airy recognition with a wave of her handkerchief. Mulcahy raised his head, stared at me stolidly, looked sidewise briefly at the girl, then dropped his face into his hands and went back to his gravel-scraping. As for me, I swung on my heel and hit it up along a side trail as fast as I could go.

On Monday, as soon as I could manage it, I ran out to Twentieth and Center, looking for the blacksmith shop. It was there, all right, a modest little shack, just big enough for three hands to work in; and there, at the forge nearest the door, stood Mulcahy, stalwart, grimy, leather-aproned, with sleeves upturned over his burly arms, battering away on a white hot horseshoe, showering the whole place with glittering sparks. He'd seemed rather a poor sort in his other clothes, loutish and dull; but I'll confess freely that now I approached with what they call trepidation. He bulked up a good sixty pounds above my weight, and every pound of it looked useful.

He stopped his hammering when I went in, and stood facing me. There was no glad greeting, no demonstration at all. If he recognized me he concealed the fact bravely; just stood and stared and waited. The only change in him was a dull red that began to show on his smutted cheeks as he gently laid his heavy hammer down on the anvil. I fished my knife from my pocket.



"Here," says I, "I want this sharpened. Have you an emery wheel?"

He took it without a word, without looking at it. His eyes were riveted on mine, staring. He opened the blades one at a time, slowly, running his thumb along their edges, never shifting his eyes by a hair's breadth. They were large, brown eyes, with a depth and a steadiness you'd call inscrutable.

He turned away with a jerk, started up his emery wheel and set to work. When the blades were ground, he finished them on an oilstone and handed the knife back to me in dead silence, just looking at me—looking and looking as though he would never have done.

"How much?" says I. He shook his head for answer, his lips set tight. "Oh, yes," says I. "Let me pay for it." Another shake, and the turkey red came up strong to the very roots of his hair. A short, braided rawhide whip lay among the litter on the bench at his side. I hadn't noticed it till he picked it up and began running the lash lightly through his brawny fingers. What was he meditating? I didn't have time to worry about that before he threw it down impatiently and started to wipe his grimy hand on the leg of his trousers. He finished the wiping on a piece of clean waste, and then, with a suddenness that made me jump, he stuck out his hand for a shake. When I gave him mine, he wrung it till every knuckle popped, his face coloring furiously, the sweat starting on his forehead in a regular freset. Then he took me by the shoulder and pushed me firmly out of the shop. Puzzled? Well, yes, you might say so. He was a brand new one to me.

On the way downtown I dropped off at Dietrich's Park—not with any plan, but helplessly. And there was Angel in her accustomed place. She wasn't reading this time; she was sitting relaxed, her head resting wearily against the back of the bench. She greeted me with a soft word, unsmiling, an air of sweet sadness enveloping her. When I sat down at her side there was no embarrassment upon her. She seemed in no hurry to speak; for a long time she

kept her wearied attitude, her beautiful eyes brooding on the sunlit water of the fountain.

By and by she straightened up and faced me, stretching her little hand toward me as a child might have done. There was no coquettishness in it, but only a shy, troubled appeal.

"You must be thinking dreadful things of me," she said in a half-whisper. "Don't—oh, don't! If you only knew! I wish I could tell you. But if you knew, you couldn't help me." Her eyes dropped away from mine and the clasp of her fingers tightened. "I hope—I hope you won't let—what happened—make any difference," she said, almost inaudibly. "It mustn't—please! It was none of my doing, believe me; but I couldn't help it. Mr. O'Rourke, won't you still try to be good to me, in spite of all appearances? I need you. Oh, I'm so unhappy!" And with that a shining jewel of a tear clung for a moment on her dark lashes, then slipped down over her lovely cheek.

"Angel," says I, "I don't know what your unhappiness is; but what's the use of it? If I can help you toward happiness, as you say I can, in this poor way, why not let me try to make you happy in the right way—forever? I don't amount to much, maybe, but—"

Again I got that wide-eyed look of startled alarm, and her hand was firmly withdrawn. "No, no, no!" says she, just above her breath. "You don't know what you're saying. You mustn't say such things to me—you mustn't, you mustn't! If I could tell you! Promise me that you won't. Promise me that you'll try to be just my good friend until you know the truth. Some time you'll know, I hope. Promise me!"

I promised. That was a foregone conclusion. I've a firm sort of character, too.

"Ah!" says she. "How can I thank you, Mr. O'Rourke? I can't. It's impossible. You won't care what happens—you'll still help me and do what I ask?"

"Yes," says I, "I sure will."

"The gentleman who came to the theater the other evening," says she,



"was with me here yesterday. You saw him. It may be that he'll show himself again when we're together—maybe often. You don't understand; but you won't let that make any difference? Please, please!" And I promised even that.

"And now I can't see you for a while," says Angel softly. "But I shall need you again soon. I'll send you word. Until I do, think kindly of me, won't you?"

It was yesterday afternoon when I found a note on my hook:

DEAR MR. O'ROURKE:

I am at liberty tonight. May I ask you to meet me again, at the corner where we met before, at nine o'clock? If you can spare the time, perhaps you would care to take me to supper somewhere. I should be very glad.

ANGEL DE VINNE.

Was I there at nine? I was. And did I get my reward? I did. If ever there was a picture of pure bewitchment on this commonplace old world, it was that Angel girl when she stepped down from her car to meet me.

She gave me a warm handclasp, a dear smile and a happy word. "You good, good boy! You're sure you weren't too busy? Where are you going to take me? Let it be some place where we can be quiet, won't you?"

I knew an enchanting little restaurant over on the south side, secluded, far from the beaten trails of the town's pleasure hunters. I'd been mooning about it all afternoon, and of the chance of having Angel all to myself at a little table in a sheltered corner, where you could look out of a big window upon the broad river. And now she had put herself in my hands. A cab came swinging around the corner, drew up to the curb on my signal and I handed her in.

For one blessed, winged hour I had her sitting across from me in the retreat I'd chosen, without so much as a cobweb of interruption. I was in dreamland, and she was a very dream sprite in the perfection of her light-hearted, ethereal charm. We talked—not once of serious things, but of trifles, nothings. With her silvery, soft laugh rippling in and out through the words, they went to my head like bubbling wine. It was all

very foolish, but I felt a supreme content.

Then, quite suddenly, a change came over her—silence and deep pallor and wide-eyed distress. She was looking beyond me, toward the big, arched entrance. Without turning my head I had a premonition of the trouble; and when I followed the direction of her frightened glance, there he was—Mulcahy.

He was standing in the middle of the main room, his hat in his hand, as though he had just come in. He was motionless as the rubber tree beside him, looking at us, his free hand hanging at his side, opening and closing, opening and closing, as if it itched for action. He didn't offer to come nearer, but stood just where he was, rooted to the floor. A waiter touched him on the arm; he roused himself, shook his big shoulders, turned and walked out to the street.

I looked at Angel. She was trembling, pale as a piece of chalk. She did her best to laugh lightly, but the laugh had a hysterical ring in it. She lifted her glass to her lips, but her hand shook so that she spilled water on the cloth.

"What the dickens?" says I to myself; and then aloud to her: "Girl, what's the matter? I can't stand it to see you so. What is there that I can do? You've got to let me do something."

"No, no!" she told me in a choking whisper. "Don't mind. It's nothing—it's passed now."

"Shall I take you away?" says I. "Do you want to go home?"

"No, no," says she again. "We'll stay here, please. I'm all right now. Talk to me."

I didn't seem able to get the talk started again; it just hobbled along; the spell was broken. After a time I came back helplessly to the thing I couldn't put out of my mind.

"Listen to me, just a minute," says I. "Nobody can have any right to torment you as that man's doing. It's unbearable. I'll have it stopped, if you'll give me the right. Won't you?"

She looked at me straight and long.



"No," says she, after a time. "Haven't I your promise? Don't speak of it again." And so I had to let it go at that.

The rest of the supper was a dull performance. I didn't get any fun out of it, though I tried faithfully enough to force the pace and get some sparkle into the conversation. We sat there till eleven o'clock. I can't say I was a bit sorry when we got up from the table. A pretty little comedy had been turned into a shabby farce. I was perfectly willing to see its finish. When I took Angel to our cab, waiting on the side street, I felt as if I'd come back to dull earth with a bump. "Uptown," I growled to the cabman, and settled sulkily into my seat. My dream was ended.

In my disgruntled mood I didn't notice for a while; but after a bit it was forced upon me that we were traveling a rough road at a swift pace, rolling and pitching, rocking and bumping. I knew we weren't on a paved street. The street was dark, too, except for a glimmering gas lamp at the corner. What's more, we weren't headed in the right direction; we were southward bound.

I stuck my head out the window and sang out to the cabman. For answer he laid his whip on the horses, lashing them into a lope, and I knocked my head against the side of the window as the off wheel dropped into a deep rut. "He's drunk!" says I to Angel. "He's been drinking while he waited for us. How am I going to get to him? I wonder if I can swing up to the seat from the step?"

The cab slowed down and came to a halt. We were on a lonely part of the road, with the houses far apart. A midnight silence was over the neighborhood. We had stopped under one of the fitful lamps. I started to open the door. It stuck. While I fussed with it, the cabman climbed deliberately down from his seat and stepped up with his face close to the window, where the flickering gaslight fell across it. The sight of that face gave me a shock, so it did. It was Mulcahy's face. His lips were set grimly; his eyes shone with a metallic glitter; his shoulders loomed huge.

I didn't much care how big and grim

he looked. The audacity of it had struck fire in me. I saw red. "How in blue blazes did you get here?" says I, my voice running up into a thin falsetto squeal of rage. "What's the meaning of this, anyway?"

He laid hold of my arm and pulled. "Get out," says he in a deep bass growl.

"I'll be jiggered if I do!" says I, and I tried to pull away from him. No good. His grip on my wrist was past breaking. Furious, I clean forgot his sixty pounds of extra beef and lashed out at him with my free fist. Striking from the inside of the cab was a handicap; the punch fell short. Before I could haul back he had both wrists pinioned. "Come, get out," says he again, and started to drag me. I fought as well as I was able, kicking, struggling, bracing myself against the sides of the door. I might have lasted quite a while if it hadn't been for that Angel girl. While I was fighting my prettiest, on a sudden I felt her arms about my neck, her lips against my ear.

"Go!" she whispered. "Do what he says. Oh, please go, for my sake!"

The sharp surprise of it relaxed me, and the relaxing was my undoing. In a moment more I was standing beside Mulcahy in the road, shaking, stuttering, mad as a big bumblebee in a bottle, but held fast and powerless. Remember the plight of the rabbit when he lammed into the aforesaid tar baby in the pea patch? That was the way I felt, exactly. Mulcahy's iron strength had me all gummed up.

He held me so until I'd sputtered myself out. He was very patient about it; he didn't seem to intend any unkindness—no rudeness, I mean. It was just his funny little way. When I'd quieted down, he let go of my wrists.

"Now," says he, "get up on the seat and drive."

"What!" says I. "Drive? Me? Not on your life I won't."

He laid one great hand on my shoulder and moved me toward the front of the cab. "Get up on the seat and drive," says he.

"I'll see you shot first!" says I, and I started to pitch and snort some more. In a second he had me locked tight in



his arms and was lifting me bodily to the driver's place. I tried my best, but I couldn't wiggle a finger. By chance I caught sight of Angel's face peering through the window, watching, faintly smiling. I quit.

"Oh, well, darn it all!" says I. "Let loose of me. I'll drive."

He slackened his grip, then helped me climb to my seat. "Thanks, friend," he rumbled. He got into the cab with Angel and slammed the door, then poked his head out. "Back to town, old man," says he, "and save the horses a little. I guess I drove 'em too hard."

It was a thoughtful sort of a drive, on my side. I've done some odd stunts in my short, young life, but none to compare with that. Just consider, please. I could only surmise how it suited the folks down inside; I was too dazed to care profoundly. Once, when I slowed down to a walk on a rough piece of road, I listened half-heartedly. In the cab was the silence of the tomb. I whipped the horses into a trot. And once again I listened, when I slackened speed at a bad crossing. From the cab came a deep bass indistinguishable word, and then a ripple of laughter, liquid, golden, with an undernote in it that I had never heard when she laughed for me, a note that rang clear and true as with the fulness of life. It was glorious; yet somehow it didn't please me. After that I listened no more, but stuck to my job of driving.

We were well downtown when Mulcahy called to me from the window: "Stop here. This'll do." I pulled up to the curb and they got out, Mulcahy sticking up his big hand to help me down. "I'll 'phone the stable to send for the cab," says he. "I paid for it when I bought off the other driver out yonder." He hesitated for a space, looking at me, giving me another sizing up, seeming to be trying to make up his mind to say something more. It didn't amount to much when he got it out. "Thanks," says he, and turned away with Angel at his side.

"Well, gee whiz!" says I to myself, as I stood gaping after them. The blacksmith was marching along, square and

straight, with Angel's hand resting in the crook of his arm. "What kind of a blazer have I run into, anyway?" says I. Nobody seemed in a hurry to answer me, and I turned across the avenue toward the office. It was midnight, and I had three hours' work to do before last edition press time.

The clock crawled around a half-hour and I carried my first bunch of copy into Jonesy's room, dropping it on his desk. He was busy with the telephone, listening hard, squirming in his chair as if it was something quite out of the ordinary.

"What? What?" says he, and broke out with his thick, hateful chuckle. That chuckle always makes me think of melted lard running out of a jug. "You—don't—say!" says he. "Why, sure! I'll be right out, as quick as I can button my collar on. Wait for me. Don't do anything till I get there." As he hung up the receiver he glimpsed me. "Teddy, quick!" says he. "Come, I want you. It's a story we must get, sure. Wait till I get somebody to take my desk."

For the second time that night I was in a cab and driving fast. We were twenty minutes on the way. As we went, I tried to dig something out of Jonesy, but not an intelligible word would he give me—nothing but that sickening snigger running sometimes into a choking exclamation. "Good!" says he. "Oh, good! Bully—bully!"

When we got out of the cab he rushed me up a flight of stone steps to the door of a big, shadowy house. A light shone faintly through the stained glass panels. Jonesy pushed a button and the door was opened by a bald priest with twinkling eyes and a Sunny Jim sort of smile. "Come in, come in!" says he, right cheerily. "We're waiting." With that he waved us into his parlor; and there, as I live, were Angel de Vinne and that Mulcahy fellow. Yes, sir, there they were.

The wheels in my head started to running backward, jarring and whirring furiously. Before I could get them choked down and turning the right way, it was all over, and I was leaning with my back against the mantelpiece with



my eyes shut, listening to a confused sound of kissing. When I could open my eyes, Angel was standing before me, radiant, challenging me with a laugh, her two hands outstretched.

"Won't you wish me joy, Mr. O'Rourke?" says she. "Come, you may kiss me, if you like—for luck."

Stupidly I looked across at Mulcahy. His face was the color of a red flannel undershirt and his teeth were chattering with sheer funk, but he managed to nod his consent. I had just fire enough left in me to let me live up to my chance. My kiss was no scared little dab at her cheek. I kissed her right. I threw both arms about her and drew her against me, holding her fast, then stooped over and kissed her on the eyes, on her soft hair and on her full, red lips, taking plenty of time for it. She was crimson and breathless when I let her go. I've got that to remember, anyway.

There was another little touch of surprise waiting, to round the thing out to completeness. When the first ecstasy was over, Jonesy and I had to sign some papers. There among the lot was the license, entitling Daniel Mulcahy, son of Michael and Anna Mulcahy, to take to wife—Angel de Vinne, of French extraction? Nay, not so. Maggie Harrahan, daughter of Patrick and Bridget Harrahan—that's the way the license read.

We were halfway downtown before I could bring myself to speak to Jonesy. When I did, it was with no passionate outburst but with scorn and disdain.

"You damned old liar!" says I.

He didn't answer directly, but away down in his fat interior he began to gurgle, and his fat lump of a body began to shake with a repressed convulsion. I'd disliked him before, cordially, heartily; I hated him then.

"Liar?" says he, by and by, in a wet, choking squeak of exhaustion. "Liar? Why, Teddy, I never told a lie in my life."

"You *are* a liar!" says I. "Why didn't you tell me she wasn't French?"

"I didn't tell you she was French," says he. "You guessed it. Just in self-defense she told Murphy her name was

de Vinne, and you fell for it; and then she didn't undeceive you because she fancied you rather liked the name."

"You told me there was a mystery—dual personality and malign influence and all that sort of rot. You told me so yourself."

"Mystery?" says he. "So I did. So there was—the everlasting mystery that's eternally new to every woman who draws the breath of life, when she falls in love. Did you ever in all your life know a bashfuller man, Teddy? Bashfulness was an agony with him. Sometimes when he'd come to the house—"

"House! Whose house?" says I.

"Why, mine," says he. "Oh, I forgot; you don't know that part yet, do you? You mustn't think you're the only loser. You've lost an illusion, but I've lost a perfect model of a housemaid—and that's worse."

"A—what?" says I.

"Why, yes," says he. "Was it unkind of me not to tell you? I couldn't, for her sake. I wanted to help her out. She was a mighty nice little girl, and I wanted to push her game along if I could. You wouldn't have been so passionately interested in my housemaid as you were in that little French mystery, now would you? She was French in your fancy, and the simon pure, original article to Mulcahy. And yet you say I lied about that dual personality business! Teddy, don't you see I couldn't give her away? The only possible chance we could figure out for bringing Dan to the scratch was to put a rival on the track. She tried it, that night you first met her—and fell into the hands of the police. Then you butted in. That was providential, son; it was lovely, clear on down to the climax tonight in the cab, with you up on the cabby's seat. Oh, oh, oh!" And with that he drove off again into his idiotic glee.

When we got out of the cab at the foot of the stairs, Jonesy said the last nasty word. "Teddy," says he, "you'll learn; but you're awfully raw yet. Now, then you go on back to your machine and write a little story of the wedding. Make it a nice one; it'll please the young people."



# TWO INCARNATIONS

By Ethel Talbot Scheffauer

ONCE, long ago, I was a queen.  
My brows with emerald  
Were bound, and yours with living green;  
You were my singing skald.

I know we loved each other then;  
Between us swords were set,  
Many strong swords of armed men;  
Long since—I half forget.

Surely beneath my olive tree  
You called upon my name,  
Once clearly, ere you died for me—  
Oh, I was sick for shame!

I called you by your name at night  
Between the olive leaves;  
But I was fair in all men's sight—  
She is no queen who grieves.

I know that love, a crimson flower,  
Was crushed between us twain;  
This I know well, because this hour  
Sometimes I dream again,

And insolent in empery,  
Triumphant to command,  
Would have my lover kneel to me,  
Worship me, kiss my hand.

## II

Once, long ago, I was your slave;  
You were a conqueror king.  
All that was mine to you I gave.  
You gave me—a gold ring.

Sometimes I danced for you alone,  
Red roses in my hair;  
Sometimes I kneeled before your throne  
Your scimiter to bear.



## THE SMART SET

It was the young queen mixed the wine  
 She gave her lord to drink;  
 I seized it where carved serpents nine  
 Wreathed round the ruby brink.

Men sheathed their daggers in my side—  
 Down crashed the carven cup;  
 Bitterly in their writhings died  
 The hounds that lapped it up.

But smiling, though my blood was rain,  
 I clung about your feet.  
 Living for you was bitter pain;  
 To die for you was sweet.

Some old forgotten poet's lay  
 Bears witness of the strife.  
 Yea, this is true—because today  
 I love you more than life.



## A MARRIED MAN'S REFLECTIONS

By James E. Hare

MAN is like a nail—if he is crooked, a woman did it.

The prude is always looking for something to shock her.

No man without pepper in his make-up is worth his salt.

In the merry waltz of life we should learn to reverse gracefully.

Divorce is simply permission to sit again at a losing game.

A padded sell—woman.

Man proposes, God disposes and the divorce court exposes.

Don't trust the man who boasts he is "as honest as the day is long." He may be a burglar and work at night.



"WHAT are air castles built of?"  
 "Gold bricks, I guess."



# LOVE AND LETTERS

By Catherine Carr

DOROTHEA was pretty—so extremely pretty that there wasn't the least bit of use of her being anything that required brains; yet there she was, at twenty, firmly resolute upon a Career.

She had been, at first, put to some thought for selection of the nature of that career. Music and art demanded such a deal of study for development, besides the possession of "the gift," and the most rigid self-research could reveal neither to Dorothea's consciousness. But literature now was different. A review of the current magazines showed just how easy achievement in that line was. Pencil and paper, a typewriter, mechanical or human, and stamps—unlimited stamps—and leisure; and there you are: fame to be had for the taking.

Dorothea's allowance provided all the purchasable components, and the only claims upon her time were those of society, of which Dorothea was, with a very superior air, announcing herself thoroughly tired; so thereupon she assembled the listed necessities and sat herself down to a new desk and began to write. Then she had her productions neatly typed and put them in great long envelopes and sent them to the leading magazines and took on several perceptible additional degrees of superiority of manner.

Note I. Superiority in its finest flower is a product of anticipation.

And then—then! Well, right here this truthful transcript becomes really painful; quite too painful for words, which are totally inadequate anyhow. No words can convey the poignant parts of the situation to an outsider, and the

initiate know only too well the high mark of inspiration's fever: the vision of celebrity, the plans for the use of the looked-for money—also the dull thud of the aeronautic hope upon the receipt of the bulky self-addressed envelope; the irritant of the printed slip whose ambiguity is worse than brutal criticism.

Suffice, then, the statement that Dorothea's manuscripts developed the feline habit of the return, save for the very occasional acceptance with which the literary gods, with something strongly resembling malignancy, lure on their devotees; and for some six months Dorothea groped in a puzzled maze, writing and rewriting her stories and restudying the pages of the magazines.

At this juncture, however, illumination was allowed her.

The social circles of the small city which was her home were mightily bestirred by the advent of Mrs. Miriam Merrill Miller, a lady whose views upon all subjects from love to lingerie were authoritative throughout all syndicate reaches. Her age was problematical, her hair intentional and her gowns imported. So was her complexion.

Dorothea worshipfully sat at her feet and learned from her the law and letter of her needs.

"But—you sweet child," the great lady first expostulated, "with that face—why a 'career'?"

Dorothea's gesture repudiated the "sweet child" status. "You did," she very properly said.

"Oh, *II*!" The lady's glance wandered to a mirror, and she smiled a smile of reflective and exclusive mystery. "Oh, yes; but never envy a woman her crown of success, my dear. Be sure



that 'for every ruby her heart hath bled, for every pearl a tear.' "

"I don't envy; and I know one must pay. Still, I am determined to succeed," Dorothea affirmed, with an ineffectual attempt to achieve resolution's straight line with a daintily fluted upper lip. "Only, it is so hard to know just how to go on."

"Experience—experience," the lady chanted. "Women," she said, in the high manner that detached her from her kind—"women are essentially personal. That is their curse. To write anything worth reading, they must dip the pen of their imagination into the purple ink of experience. To be in touch with the heartbeats of others, they must look with understanding into the eyes of love and clasp hands with desolation."

"Oh!" breathed Dorothea.

"Yes, yes; it is the only way. Love and suffer, suffer and love. Only by loving and suffering can we pierce the mundane veil."

When Dorothea thought over this advice, she got as sum total the assurance that she must love and renounce to become great, even as the speaker was great; though what she herself had renounced wasn't quite clear. She was married—or, perhaps, divorced. Perhaps that was it: she had left a loved husband, like as not, because of her devotion to her career. Anyhow, Dorothea dutifully made up her mind to fall in love and renounce.

The prospect wasn't exactly pleasant, but then what were pleasure and happiness in comparison with a career, and having one's picture in the magazines and one's opinion in symposia? Dorothea was pensively sad but no less resolute, and she went into a reflective retreat to plan immediate execution. There was, certainly, no use in dilly-dallying about anything so important now that she had been provided with guideposts.

Pretty as she was, Dorothea had never been in love—possibly because the young men of her set had kept her too busy with their multitudinous attentions to permit any concentration; and she decided that she would

pursue her sentimental research in alien fields.

"I simply couldn't get out of marrying him here," she told herself. "Besides, there isn't one of the crowd who has a particle of romance about him."

So Dorothea tore her mental forces from consideration of her career long enough to order a most effective wardrobe, and with a long-suffering aunt as chaperon, journeyed to Clifton-by-the-Sea in quest of the love and suffering that should lead her to the high places of fame.

A favoring destiny had had, seemingly, Dorothea's selection in charge, for at the very same hotel an artist and a poet were found to be staying, and they were neither in the least hesitant or reticent in evidence of their admiration.

All this was very pleasant for Dorothea—also profitable in a way, for they both said truly delightful things, quite worthy of record in the little red book which she carried about for the preservation of such "copy"; yet, despite her receptive state of mind and the artist's and poet's exceptional attractions, her best will and their best efforts failed utterly in the desirable heart thrills, and she was near to the discouraging conclusion that she was of the type for whom love was impossible.

Now right here is where the rather more than full-sized figure of Allen Caruthers did things to the perspective. An event to be marked by a cross—or a double cross, according to how you felt about him. By way of swift and adequate conclusion, he was the equal of either the artist or the poet, and he had them distanced all of a lap in forthright execution.

His immediate conclusion regarding Dorothea was that all the fifty-seven reasons were in favor of his falling in love with her, and he was so prompt in demonstrating his decision that he very shortly filled in the foreground. Quite acceptably to Dorothea, it was obvious. If it hadn't been he couldn't have done it, of course, though he was not a bit conducive to introspection, and his only notion of psychology seemed recognition of the moment.



Cheerfulness was indeed the keynote of his philosophy of life, and under its influence Dorothea would forget for hours at a time that she was of fame's elect and so doomed to renunciation and suffering. And when she did remember it she reconciled the incongruity of her cheerful, even frivolous present with her gloomy future by the assurance that she was collecting "material," though, truth to tell, the dust accumulated upon the red book. Carruthers was inclined to colloquialism of converse and triteness in expression of sentiment. He assured Dorothea with the triumph of the discoverer and the satisfaction of the polished phrasemaker that she was "quite different from other girls." And, instead of being disgusted with such commonplaceness, she actually blushed and experienced the desirable heart thrills.

Subsequent detail is too bromidic for record, either in Dorothea's notebook or here—any reader would skip it—and we come to Carruthers's proposal. It, at least, had its element of originality.

"When are you going to marry me?" he asked, quite without pleading or preface.

"Oh!" said Dorothea, rosily palpitant. Then she had a second thought, which brought her to earth more swiftly than ever did the receipt of a bulky self-addressed envelope. "But—I forgot—my Career." Dorothea always said it that way—with a capital.

"Your 'career'?"

"Yes. I'm going to be a great writer," she modestly explained.

"Good! So am I."

"What!"

"Yes. Not a 'great writer.' Only the garden variety. I'm 'J. Jackson.' I write those grafter yarns, you know. Maybe you've read some of 'em."

"Yes," Dorothea nodded. Personally she had felt superior to the "grafter yarns," though they were amusing in a way, and she had wondered at the price per word their author was said to receive. And here he was the man with whom she was in love! Dorothea was not trying to deny that either to herself or to him.

"Yes," she repeated a little vaguely.

"I tried to put 'heart interest' in one of them, and the editor said it was punk. Advised me to fall in love. I'd always been too busy to mix in with that sort of thing. That's why I came here—and I *did*, all right—clear in and over—but it isn't any of it for publication, and—"

"Oh! Oh, my goodness!" Dorothea broke in hysterically. "To think! The two of us!"

"There have always been two—ever since Eden." Carruthers advanced, rising capably to the occasion's demand.

"But—you see—that is why I'm here, too. Mrs. Miller—Miriam Merrill Miller, you know—told me one must love and—and suffer, to become great."

"'Suffer!' Tommyrot!" Carruthers protested.

"No; she knows. She is famous—and—and so I—can't. I'm sorry—not for myself. I knew all along that this was the price I must pay. 'For every ruby the heart must bleed, for every pearl a tear,'" she quoted mournfully. "But I do hate to hurt you. You do care, I know."

"Well—some!" he interjected.

"That is my only regret," Dorothea contritely murmured. "I'm afraid I didn't stop to think of how someone else would have to pay, too. I hope you will forgive me—and—and you must forget me," she said with the mien of a sweetly repentant but loftily aloof goddess.

Carruthers's face lines were a concert of protest and he opened his mouth swiftly for such expression; then he closed his lips in a manner that squared his jaw line while he considered her down-drooped eyelids reflectively.

"You want me to do that? Forget you?"

"It—it would be much better for you."

"Well, yes; you're right, I suppose. My career demands happiness—peace of mind. I can't write if I've anything disturbing on my mind."

"Oh, men are different, it seems," Dorothea murmured. "I hope you won't think unkindly of me. You understand what a career means to me."

"Oh, yes, I understand; and as it



means bread and butter to me as well, I'll have to take your advice."

He sighed, but his manner was obviously of resignation, so there was nothing for Dorothea to do but suggest returning to the hotel, where she at once went to her room and gave way to tears.

Afterward she made a very careful toilet and went down to the dance that was on that night and openly encouraged the artist. He was much more valuable to fictional needs anyhow than Carruthers, though that husky man—person rather dulled the edge of her appreciation of the artistic companionship by his apparent satisfaction in that of an athletic young woman, totally different in type from Dorothea.

If Carruthers had not indeed had time to "mix in" with the affairs of love, one is forced to conclude that he was gifted with a very superior brand of intuition.

This remained the order of their companionship: Dorothea and the artist, and Carruthers and the athletic girl; and though Dorothea daily realized that she had indeed achieved misery, it didn't seem the right sort, somehow. And its effect was neither a pensive melancholy from which one could evolve delicate, and acceptable, "prose pastels," nor what the celebrity had, in a burst of frankness which had shocked Dorothea a little, termed "the tortures of the damned," that might be expected to produce the transcript of "strength."

Instead, it effected what had the surface semblance of ordinary snappishness. Dorothea found fault with her clothes, pronounced the poet a *poseur* and the artist an insufferable egotist, doubted the complexion of the athletic young woman and complained of the climate and the service of Clifton-by-the-Sea, while she also steadily opposed any suggestion of departure made by the chaperoning aunt, quite justifying the relative in her decision that Dorothea did not know what she wanted.

In reality, however, she was wrong. Dorothea knew indeed what she wanted, but her desires being of such diverse nature—namely, Carruthers and the Career—their effect was conflict, but

not, sad to say, any masterpieces. And in addition to these causes for unrest, Dorothea was cumbered with the profound conviction that the athletic girl was altogether unsuited to Carruthers.

This was very disturbing and distressing. She felt herself, in a way, to blame; and then she had the interests of his career so much at heart, even though he could be but a melancholy memory in her life and had been so derelict in providing memories—no pleading, no protests, no kisses even—that he scarcely deserved remembrance. Still, the fact remained. She was anxious that he should find happiness—for his career's sake if for nothing more—and it was sad indeed that one so lacking in the qualities to effect it should become dominant in his life. It remained very heavy upon her mind, but of course, under the circumstances, she could not warn him.

Then fate again intervened. It must have been fate, for it is the only way of explaining how Dorothea came to swim until she became exhausted and had to call for help when Carruthers was the only person near enough to come to her rescue.

And saving persons from drowning is quite a personal proceeding. You have to get a good grip on them and they're likely to hold very closely to you. So figure the situation to yourself. Carruthers's clasp was vastly more that of a lover than the rescuer, and he broke into a torrent of "Darlings" and things like that, gratifying enough, no doubt, to the person so addressed, but too trite for so much per word; and Dorothea didn't struggle a bit, and she didn't remonstrate nor mention careers until they waded out at a sequestered strip of beach. Then her ambition made its final up-flicker.

"We—we might collaborate," she advanced.

"We will," he said with decision. "By 'getting married and living happily ever after.' There's no putting it over the old romancers for the fancy finish," he affirmed.

And Dorothea must have agreed, for that is just what they did—got married, that is.



# A TABLOID

By Arthur Eckersley

## CHARACTERS

SHERWOOD (*a dramatist*)  
KNIGHT (*his friend*)  
THORNDIKE (*an old actor*)

PLACE: *Sherwood's chambers, London.*      TIME: *The present; close on midnight.*

**S**CENE—*A handsomely furnished room. There is a door to the hall at the back, with an outer door seen beyond it. A table stands in the center, littered with writing materials, and holding a reading lamp. There is a sideboard at the back, bearing a decanter, syphons and glasses.*

*As the curtain rises, enter SHERWOOD, a handsome man of about forty, followed by KNIGHT, slightly younger. Both are in evening dress, with overcoats and opera hats. SHERWOOD turns on the light.*

SHERWOOD

Well, here we are. What's the time?

KNIGHT

Nearly twelve. The very witching hour, what?

SHERWOOD

Humph. One advantage of our English habits is that you get home in time to do a bit of work before turning in. Have a whiskey?

KNIGHT

No, thanks. Don't know why I came up this extra flight of stairs. Must be toddling down again to my own room now.

SHERWOOD

Rot! I don't really want to start writing straight off.

KNIGHT

Then you ought to. Lord, Sherwood, if my work brought me in as much as yours, I'd grudge every minute I spent away from it.

SHERWOOD

Stuff!

KNIGHT

Lucky devil! Here you are with a play running that's the rage of London, making a fortune for you while you wait, and nothing to do but to sit down and write another.

SHERWOOD (*coming down to the table and fingering a manuscript*)

Yes. Here's the other. Half finished already.

KNIGHT

What did I tell you? Behold the successful dramatist, without a care or an enemy in the world!

SHERWOOD (*frowning slightly*)

Humph!

KNIGHT

That's true, isn't it?

SHERWOOD

Without an enemy in the world? Well, yes, perhaps. None to speak of.



KNIGHT

I knew it. And half the managers in town on their knees for that manuscript. (*Curiously*) Is that the play about the man who commits a murder?

SHERWOOD

Yes. It's the one I was telling you of tonight in the bar.

KNIGHT

Ah! You said you didn't know what the hero's sensations would be, and you'd half a mind to try a murder yourself and find out.

SHERWOOD

That's it. (*He laughs.*) My idea of humor.

KNIGHT (*gravely*)

You don't mind my saying so, old man, but I think, if I were you, I wouldn't say things like that, in public—even humorously.

SHERWOOD

Oh, my dear fellow, why not?

KNIGHT

One never knows. They might come to bear an awkward meaning.

SHERWOOD

Rubbish! How could they?

KNIGHT

As I say, one never knows. There were half a dozen men in that bar tonight who may have overheard you. As a matter of fact, I saw that some of them did. They looked round curiously.

SHERWOOD

Perhaps. You make me appear horribly conceited, but—

KNIGHT

Oh, yes, I know; you're getting to be something of a celebrity. But that wasn't exactly their expression. At least (*Thoughtfully*) not one of them.

SHERWOOD

One of them?

KNIGHT

A fellow in the corner. You had your back to him. He overheard every word, and I could swear he laughed—rather queerly. Not exactly at you. It was the others he was watching.

SHERWOOD (*impatiently*)

My dear chap, how mysterious you are tonight! What on earth are you driving at? What was the fellow like?

KNIGHT

Oh, the usual type of old actor: out of work, I should say. Sallow, and down at heel generally.

SHERWOOD (*showing agitation*)

Old actor!

KNIGHT

Yes. Do you think you know him?

SHERWOOD

Oh, I know many old actors, and they're most of 'em out of work.

KNIGHT

What made you start, then?

SHERWOOD

Did I? Oh, well, when I said I hadn't an enemy in the world, I perhaps exaggerated. As a matter of fact, there is one man who I suppose comes under that definition.

KNIGHT

And you think this may have been he?

SHERWOOD (*lightly*)

Holmes, you're a miracle. I've no reason to think so really, except that he is—or was—an actor. I've not seen him for ages.

KNIGHT

If mine was the fellow, you needn't doubt his being your enemy.

SHERWOOD

Well, he can't do me much harm now. And if he tries, in that case I might begin my murdering experiments with a double object, eh?



KNIGHT

Don't, old man. Get yourself out of that habit of talking reckless nonsense, or you'll be sorry for it some day. Well, I said I wasn't going to keep you, and here I am croaking like an old woman.

SHERWOOD

Don't worry about me.

KNIGHT

All right. I'll be off and leave you to your masterpiece. Good night, old chap. I shall think of you over my head, wrestling with inspiration. I might even hear you if you wrestle hard enough; these floors are jolly thin.

SHERWOOD

Well, I hope you won't, for your sake. Good night.

KNIGHT

Good night. *(Both go to the outer door, which SHERWOOD opens.)* Hullo, they've put the light out on the stairs. Never mind; I can find my way down one flight. So long.

*(His voice is heard receding. SHERWOOD then shuts the outer door, switches off the light in the hall and returns slowly into the room.)*

SHERWOOD *(standing by the table)*

An old out-of-work actor! Queer if it should be the same, when I've been thinking so much of him lately. *(He rouses himself.)* Well, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, and I did no more than many another would have done in my place. Still—if he should come, and try to threaten—What rubbish! As if it were likely! Now then to work.

*(He takes off his dress coat and puts on a velvet jacket, then turns on the reading lamp, puts out the other light, sits at the table and lights his pipe.)*

If I were only as sure of myself as dear old Bobbie Knight imagines me! Wouldn't do to come a bowler over the second, after a success like my first. People might begin to think it odd. Well, here goes.

*(He draws the papers toward him and begins to read. A slight pause, then a gentle knocking is heard on the outer door. SHERWOOD glances up; the knocking is repeated. His face begins to show some uneasiness.)*

Queer! Someone outside at this hour. Oh—it must be old Bob come back for something.

*(The knocking begins again. With a quick movement he gets up, extinguishes his pipe and goes into the hall, turning on the light. He opens the outer door. Against the darkness beyond you see, standing on the threshold, an elderly, pale man, shabbily dressed, like a decayed actor. He looks steadily at SHERWOOD for a moment. Then SHERWOOD speaks sharply)*

What is it? What do you want?

THORNDIKE

You know.

SHERWOOD

Oh, it's you, is it? *(A slight pause, then quickly)* Come in.

THORNDIKE *(entering)*

That's better. That's more like your friendly, hospitable self, Mr. Sherwood. I felt sure you'd be glad to see me.

SHERWOOD *(following him into the room, after closing the outer door)*

Then you felt wrong. I'm not glad to see you. As a matter of fact, I'm very busy.

THORNDIKE *(leering)*

Another play, Mr. Sherwood? I see it is. Quite a coincidence, my visit.

SHERWOOD

Look here, I won't pretend I don't guess what you've come for. You want money, eh?

THORNDIKE

You put the matter very bluntly, Mr. Sherwood.

SHERWOOD

I've no time to waste. How much? Here's five pounds; will that satisfy you?



THORNDIKE

Oh, dear, dear. I'd much rather that we sat down and talked over the matter in a friendly spirit. You mustn't imagine that I've come to blackmail you, Mr. Sherwood.

SHERWOOD (*with a short laugh*)  
It looks rather like it, doesn't it?

THORNDIKE (*seating himself*)

Well, appearances are so often deceptive. For example: Here are you, the author of that successful play, rich and famous. People wouldn't think, to look at us two, that it was really *my* play, would they?

SHERWOOD (*sitting at the other side of the table, watching him*)

Well?

THORNDIKE

Well— However, I've no wish to make accusations—unless I'm obliged.

SHERWOOD

Exactly; I understand that as a threat, eh?

THORNDIKE

Oh, dear, you do twist my words. (*Looking round the room*) Very agreeable quarters these, Mr. Sherwood. Circumstances have altered since I last had the pleasure of talking to you.

SHERWOOD

That was some years ago.

THORNDIKE

Three years, Mr. Sherwood, since we were on tour together, and I did myself the honor to show you that little scheme of mine, that idea for a play (*Chuckling gently*)—the play

SHERWOOD

Hadn't you better come to the point?

THORNDIKE

You were very much interested in the idea, and praised it. I remember thinking at the time how kind that was of you.

SHERWOOD (*rising impatiently*)  
And afterward—since you won't say

what you mean, I'll say it myself—I took the idea and used it for my own ends; made money out of it, which you think should have been yours, eh?

THORNDIKE (*gently reminiscent*)

It's not only the money, Mr. Sherwood; there are other little matters between us. I always consider, in my fanciful way, that it was you who killed my wife.

SHERWOOD

I?

THORNDIKE

She was a foolish woman, and perhaps over-sanguine. But she believed a great deal in that play of mine, and the shock of—of what happened—helped undoubtedly—to kill her.

SHERWOOD

Have you come here tonight to threaten me?

THORNDIKE

Oh, Mr. Sherwood! Just when we were chatting together so pleasantly over old times!

SHERWOOD

You've not answered my question. How much do you want?

THORNDIKE

I want (*Meaningly*) a great deal from you, Mr. Sherwood.

SHERWOOD

Well, I'll make it ten pounds.

THORNDIKE

Ten pounds now, and more in a little time. I dare say I shall drop in often.

SHERWOOD

And if I defied you? You can prove nothing. That my play bears some vague resemblance to an idea of yours. That sort of accusation has been brought often enough, and always failed. You should know that.

THORNDIKE

But it hardly does a beginner any good, Mr. Sherwood. Not one who is just making his name. That's what you are going to pay me to prevent.



SHERWOOD

Well, I've said how far I'll go. Ten pounds now, and — perhaps — another later on. You can't bleed me forever. After that you may starve for all I care; and the sooner the better.

THORNDIKE (*gently*)

Not starve, Mr. Sherwood. Starvation isn't a pleasant death.

SHERWOOD

Please yourself.

THORNDIKE

It was starvation—and grief—that killed my dear wife. Starvation isn't a pleasant death to watch either. Fortunately I have some friends who would save me from that.

SHERWOOD

Are there others that you get money from, then?

THORNDIKE

Oh, dear me, no, Mr. Sherwood. Not that kind of friends at all. I was alluding (*Fumbling in his pocket and producing a small phial of tabloids*) to these.

SHERWOOD (*curious in spite of himself*)

Those?

THORNDIKE

The one universal friend of failures like me. We needn't mention his name; but these (*Removing the stopper, fingering the phial almost lovingly*)—these are his little ministers.

SHERWOOD (*fascinated*)

You mean—death?

THORNDIKE

Put one of these in your drink—tasteless and undetectable afterward, they tell me. No pain. And in three minutes (*Smiling*) you'd be as wise as Solomon. It's an old prescription that I've had for many years.

SHERWOOD (*fiercely*)

Why do you carry them about with you? Why do you bring them here, tonight?

THORNDIKE

I always carry them about with me, Mr. Sherwood, in case of need. After all, one never knows.

SHERWOOD

One never knows?

THORNDIKE

What might happen. (*In fumbling with the phial, he overturns it. The tabloids are spilled on the table toward SHERWOOD.*) Oh, I've upset them. How very unfortunate! We must gather them all up—carefully.

SHERWOOD (*repeating as though dazed*)

One never knows what might happen.

THORNDIKE (*gathering the tabloids up with eagerness*)

It wouldn't do to leave any of these lying about, would it? No, no. They're too precious for that. (*He appears not to notice that SHERWOOD has covered one with his hand. He gathers the others into the phial.*) Ha, ha! It shows what confidence I have in you, Mr. Sherwood, to come to your rooms all alone like this, at dead of night, and show you the way to get rid of me. I suppose—ha, ha!—you're the one man in the world who stands to gain anything by it.

SHERWOOD (*furious*)

You old devil! Take your money—there it is. Now go! Go quickly!

THORNDIKE

Yes, Mr. Sherwood, I'm going. (*Pocketing the note*) Ten pounds. The first instalment of—ha, ha!—my little income.

SHERWOOD

Go!

THORNDIKE (*smiling*)

It's very late, sir. You couldn't stand an old friend a drink before he goes? Something to keep out the cold?

SHERWOOD

Will you go if I do?



THORNDIKE

Certainly, of course, Mr. Sherwood, sir, I'll go at once.

(SHERWOOD *impatiently turns and mixes a drink at the sideboard. He has still the drug in his hand.*)

SHERWOOD

Very well, then.

THORNDIKE (*still seated at the table, apparently musing happily to himself*)

Yes, I'll go. But I shall come back. Oh, naturally I shall come back. Very often. Perhaps, when you least expect me, I shall drop in some evening, like this, and then you'll give me more money, because you're afraid of me. And—and the jest will be that you'll never know—when—I'm—coming.

SHERWOOD (*behind him, with the glass*)

Take care; you can go too far. I've warned you—take care.

THORNDIKE (*as though not heeding*)

I heard that you were engaged to be married, Mr. Sherwood, to a very charming young lady. Ha, ha! My little tale might interest her, mightn't it?

SHERWOOD (*hoarsely, his hand shaking*)

You don't know what you're doing.

THORNDIKE

Oh, yes, I do. I'm going to make you pay now. For as long as I live, you're going to be made to pay.

SHERWOOD

Then if I must, I must. For—as long as you live.

(*Unseen by THORNDIKE, he drops the tabloid in the glass—the liquid fizzes for a moment, then is clear as before.*)

THORNDIKE (*seeming to have noticed nothing*)

Ha, ha! That's better. That's your reasonable self again. I knew you'd come round. And my drink mixed with your own hands. Very hospitable, I'm sure. (*He takes the tumbler from SHERWOOD, who is staring at him in terrified silence.*) I'm much obliged to

you. Here's to our old friendship, Mr. Sherwood. (*He drinks, then puts the glass down on the table.*) Strange!

SHERWOOD (*fascinated*)

What?

THORNDIKE (*slowly*)

They told me it had no taste.

SHERWOOD

What do you mean?

THORNDIKE (*watching him*)

That in three minutes I shall be dead.

SHERWOOD

My God! You—know?

THORNDIKE

I knew all the time. (*Gathering himself up fiercely, he almost hisses out the next words.*) It was a little trap, Mr. Sherwood.

SHERWOOD

A trap—for whom?

THORNDIKE

For you. (*His manner is quite altered, becomes fierce and vindictive.*) Oh, and you walked into it so prettily. So prettily.

SHERWOOD

What do you mean? You—you are dying. I've poisoned you. It's not I that's trapped.

THORNDIKE (*mocking him*)

Isn't it? I'm dying perhaps. But you'll come after me, and by a worse door.

SHERWOOD

Pshaw! You rave! You don't realize yet what's happened. You were my enemy, and I'm rid of you. You've only a few minutes to live.

THORNDIKE

And how long have you? The gallows, Mr. Sherwood. You're very near it.

SHERWOOD

The gallows!



THORNDIKE

You don't realize yet what's happened. That was where the scheme came in. I've trapped you. What do I care even if I am dead? I shall watch you, all the same—and be satisfied. Listen. *(He speaks quickly, his eyes fastened on SHERWOOD's face.)* It was when I heard you talking tonight that I got the idea. Sometime you might commit a murder, you said. Others heard it as well; I was careful about that. Then I went to—to my garret, where I live now, alone, since my wife died, and I wrote there a little note to be taken to the police. Do you begin to understand?

SHERWOOD *(weakly)*

Go on.

THORNDIKE

I think you do. It was to tell them where I was coming; to say that I had good reason to fear you, so that, if I didn't return, they would understand why. The police act quickly on a hint of that sort, Mr. Sherwood. They should be here—almost—directly.

SHERWOOD

You devil! So that was your scheme, was it?

THORNDIKE *(staggering to his feet, glaring at SHERWOOD with concentrated hate)*

Yes. That was the scheme. I should have been dead soon, anyhow; the doctors told me that. And it was worth a few weeks to see you—now. Aha! Mr. Sherwood, the successful thief, who killed my wife and stole my triumph from me! Now then—*(He staggers and sways, still watching SHERWOOD)*—you're beginning to pay in earnest. The first instalment—ha, ha! The hangman shall collect the last—ah—

SHERWOOD

How dare you!

*(He makes a movement toward him. THORNDIKE sees it and laughs.)*

THORNDIKE

Too late. You understand. There's no need for that—now. Ah!

*(He reels and falls lifeless behind the table.)*

SHERWOOD *(trembling violently)*

My God! He's gone! I've killed him. They'll find him here, and then—they'll know who did it. I've condemned myself. "Some day I might commit a murder"—my own words; Knight knew—he warned me. What's that? Footsteps—on the stairs; it's they—already! *(He goes to the door and listens.)* There is someone coming up. Ah! *(Loud knocking is heard at the outer door.)* Caught, in a trap—he said so. But I can have the laugh on him yet. Ha, ha! *(The knocking grows louder.)* Knock away; you'll not bring me to the gallows alive. *(He snatches the phial from the table, and begins to empty the contents into his hand.)* I can have the laugh on you still. With these.

*(There is a knock, and a crash. The outer door flies open, and KNIGHT, in his shirt sleeves, bursts into the room.)*

KNIGHT

Sherwood, what is it? I heard a fall. *(He sees the body on the floor, and starts back with a terrified cry.)* My God! What's this?

SHERWOOD

Ha, ha! It's you, is it? Just in time to see your prophecy fulfilled. I told you I should commit a murder, and I have. That was my enemy. I stole his work from him; he came here to threaten me, and I've killed him. What's the good of concealment now? The police know who did it. Everybody knows. They're on their way to take me at this moment—but I can escape them yet. Like this. *(He shows the drug in his hand.)* That's the poison that killed him. Now—it's my turn.

KNIGHT *(horrified)*

Dick!

SHERWOOD

It's the only escape left me now. Look.

*(He puts his hand to his mouth, and swallows the tabloid.)*



KNIGHT (*rushing forward and catching his arm*)

Dick! Good God! Poisoned!

SHERWOOD (*standing motionless—speaking in a whisper*)

Too late. I'm a dead man.

(*From behind the table, the grinning face of THORNDIKE rises slowly into view. He watches SHERWOOD with a little chuckle of amusement.*)

THORNDIKE (*mildly*)

Oh, dear me, no, you're not, Mr. Sherwood—any more than I am. They're quite harmless, those little lozenges—quite harmless, I assure you. It was a little trick of mine, that's all.

SHERWOOD (*unnerved, incredulous*)

A trick?

THORNDIKE

You said you wanted to know how it felt to commit a murder, didn't you? Well, I fancy I've let you see—pretty completely.

SHERWOOD (*dazed*)

You weren't dead, after all?

THORNDIKE

You must accept my word for that, Mr. Sherwood. They used to tell me I was good at death scenes.

KNIGHT

But I don't understand. What does this mean?

THORNDIKE

I've told you. It's the second time I've helped our friend here with his work. The first time perhaps was not quite intentional on my part; this we'll

regard as my revenge, eh? We're quits now. Oh, and that blackmail, as you called it, Mr. Sherwood—that, of course, was only part of my little scheme. (*He fumbles in his breast*) I must return you the proceeds.

KNIGHT (*glancing at SHERWOOD*)  
Coals of fire!

THORNDIKE (*laying a note on the table*)

The ten pounds, Mr. Sherwood. And now I'll be going.

SHERWOOD (*passing his hand over his eyes, speaking as one waking from a dream*)

No, no. Stop. I've something more to say. Tell me, where are you living now?

THORNDIKE (*producing a card*)

That will find me, Mr. Sherwood. But why?

SHERWOOD

Because—because you've taught me more than one thing tonight. I've treated you badly, but I'll make amends now. (*He gives him the note.*) As you said yourself—the first instalment. You'll hear from me every week now. I want—to make amends.

THORNDIKE

Mr. Sherwood, I—I thank you.

SHERWOOD (*eagerly*)

Every week, remember.

THORNDIKE

Every week? That's generous. But—it won't be for very long, Mr. Sherwood. Good night. (*He goes out slowly at the left. The others watch him.*)

CURTAIN



**SELF-SACRIFICE** too often means eating the thing you detest that others like in order to leave to them the things they detest that you like.



# LES "SIX JOURS" DE BAR-BAGOULADE

Par Jacques Nayral

**B**ARBAGOULADE, ex-coureur cycliste, conte ses souvenirs devant un auditoire attentif et émerveillé de jeunes aspirants-champions.

Comme on parlait de la course de Six Jours qui vient de se dérouler au Vélodrome d'Hiver, Barbagoulade a pris la parole :

— Je les ai courus, moi, les Six Jours, pas ceux de Paris, mais ceux de New York; même que je faisais équipe avec Coquenbois, et qu'il y est resté, en Amérique, lui, et marié encore, rapport aux Six Jours.

— Raconte-nous ça, Barba.

— Voilà. On nous avait engagés, Coquenbois et moi, pour faire équipe dans les Six Jours, vu que, pour la combine en courses de primes, il n'y en avait pas deux comme nous au monde. Moi, ça m'embêtait un peu d'aller là-bas, des pays de sauvages où les gens ne parlent même pas français, que je disais. Mais Coquenbois me décida: il y avait des tas de pépètes à gagner. En Amérique, mes enfants, faut vous dire que les louis, c'est comme qui dirait ici les sous. On vous donne une livre comme ici Durand vous donne dix ronds, et une livre, c'est vingt-cinq francs, pécaïre! A ce point de vue-là, pour un chouette patelin, c'est un chouette patelin.

On s'embarque. Traversée épatante, dans des cabines de lusque, oùsqu'on nous apportait le chocolat au lit. Six repas par jour, mes enfants, et quels repas, troun de l'air! Des truffes tout le temps et des frites à discrétion. Un Gargantua, quoi!

A New York, un hôtel, ah, pitchoun, un hôtel à loger des princesses! Mais,

par exemple, pas moyen de s'amuser. On nous avait accroché une espèce de manager qui ne nous lâchait pas d'une semelle, et qui nous douchait, et qui nous bordait le soir dans nos plumes et s'en allait en fermant la porte à clef. Une vraie glu!

Enfin, le départ des Six Jours! On était dix-huit équipes. Dès le début, je me dis: "S'agit de prendre un tour d'avance tout de suite, et de vivre là-dessus jusqu'à la fin." C'était pas si mal calculé. Le malheur, c'est qu'ils étaient tous frais comme des roses et que j'avais beau pousser, impossible de les semer. Au bout d'une demi-heure de ce train-là, j'étais vanné. "Appelez Coquenbois," que je dis, et je descends. Mais mon Coquenbois n'était pas prêt. Quand il s'amène, il y avait cinq minutes que j'étais descendu et nous avions perdu trente-trois tours. "Ça ne fait rien, que je dis, on rattrapera ça quand ils seront finis."

Je peux pas vous raconter tout par le détail, ni comment qu'on bouloittait des poulets tout entiers et qu'on se rinçait le bec avec du champagne du matin au soir. Car pour ce qui est du champagne, mes enfants, vous parlez si ça coule là-bas; on boit du cliquot kif-kif vous buvez de l'eau-de-seltz.

Le sixième jour, j'étais—je vous lirai pas comment j'étais, j'en sais plus rien. Je tournais quand c'était mon tour, je descendais quand on me disait de descendre.

Pourtant, il y a quelque chose que je me rappelle. A un moment, je me fiche les quatre fers en l'air. Quand on me ramasse, je vois une espèce d'angliche



qui rigolait dans une loge, avec un air de se payer ma tête. Avant qu'on me retienne, j'enjambe la balustrade, je saute sur l'angliche et j'y administre une volée, ah, mais, une volée, qu'il en est resté sur place. Un tas de gens arrivent, on soigne l'angliche—et on m'emmène. Tout le monde m'acclamait. Moi, je demande pourquoi.

— Comment, que me dit mon manager, vous ne savez pas qui vous avez mis knockout?

— *Cocaou*, que je fais, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire?

— Le bonhomme que vous avez étendu, dans la loge, vous ne savez pas qui c'est? Mais c'est Billy Plunkett, le champion du monde de boxe.

— Bon, que je dis sans m'épater, eh, bien le champion du monde, comme vous dites, ça y apprendra à connaître le savate.

Et là-dessus, je vais me coucher. Mais c'était pas fini. Voilà qu'on vient me réveiller. Je proteste naturellement, mais le manager me dit:

— Criez pas, votre fortune est faite.

Là-dessus, il me conduit près d'un gros monsieur, une espèce d'hercule haut de deux mètres, qui pesait bien trois cents. Moi, je crois d'abord que c'est un autre champion de boxe, et comme de juste, devant un morceau pareil, je m'apprête à cavalier. Mais le manager me retient. L'hercule me tendait un verre de champagne, en riboulant des gros yeux et en disant un tas de mots que je ne comprenais pas. Moi, je répondais: "A la vôtre."

Et puis, le voilà qui s'écarte et qui me montre à côté de lui une petite miss. Ça veut dire donzelle, en américain. La petite miss riait, riait, en disant elle aussi un tas de choses que je ne comprenais pas. Moi, pour ne pas être en reste de politesse, je trinque avec elle en disant: "A la tienne, Etienne."

Enfin, le manager m'explique que la petite miss voulait m'épouser, et que le gros, qui était son père, y consentait.

— Vous ferez là une affaire superbe, disait-il. Le papa est le roi de la saucisse.

Le roi de la saucisse? Té, qu'est-ce qu'ils diraient, les copains de Paris et ceux de la Cannebière, donc, en apprenant que Barbagoulade était devenu le gendre du roi de la saucisse, un homme qui avait une montre en or, mes enfants, grosse comme cette soucoupe, des montres comme on n'en voit qu'en Amérique.

Mais, voilà le malheur, quand on a trop bu de champagne, ou trop tourné en rond, peut-être bien les deux, on fait des bêtises. Les Américains sont toujours pressés, et la petite voulait qu'on s'épouse tout de suite: moi je m'obstinais à finir la course avant.

Faut vous dire qu'en Amérique, c'est pas comme ici. On se marie en cinq minutes. On va, avec sa miss, devant une espèce d'homme noir qui tient une Bible, un révérend, qu'on appelle. "Ça colle?" que dit l'homme à la Bible.— "Ça colle," qu'on répond. Et vlan, vous êtes mariés.

Bref, comme je ne céda pas, on décide d'attendre la fin de la course. Il me restait à faire la dernière heure.

Mais, va te promener, quand je reviens, après l'emballage, la petite miss avait filé. Elle était si pressée d'épouser un "Frenchman" que, pendant que je roulais ma dernière heure, elle s'était rabattue sur mon associé et elle avait épousé illico ce polisson de Coquenbois.

Et voilà comment, ajoute Barbagoulade en manière de conclusion, je suis le gendre du père Lecassoulet qui tient un garage à Neuilly, quand j'aurais dû épouser la fille du Roi de la saucisse.



**L**A vie est une suite de combinaisons, et il faut les étudier, les suivre, pour arriver à se maintenir toujours en bonne position.



# A PROTEST FOR VULGARITY

By George Jean Nathan

THE difference twixt a risqué American farce and a risqué French farce is simply this: in the former the plot proceeds *toward* adultery; in the latter the plot proceeds *from* adultery.

Or, in another phrasing, the American product deals with adultery as a probability of the immediate future, while the Gallic product deals with the probability of adultery of the immediate past being found out.

The merciless, almost frantic, circum-spection exercised by authors and adaptors of so-called risqué American farce to prevent a realization of this potential adultery—a whitewashing process that has been going on longer than the oldest amongst us can remember—has now arrived at the point where the average risqué home-done boudoir affair is about as risqué as a bed in a hospital.

By nature and training a prude and Puritan, I protest to the fullest force of invective against this foul and nauseous practise of our farce writers. I object to this salamandering school of farce that has barnacled itself to the name American, this teaser academy of pseudo-risqué writing. It disgusts me, goes against the stomach. Here a legitimate field for the incursion of Mr. Anthony Comstock. Were I in that worthy gentleman's place, I should have such farces off the boards, I may tell you, in quick order. Had I my way, there would be no farce of the class discussed permitted on the American stage. Not one! I should insist, and to my aid should invoke the law, that the present laboriously suggestive bed-badgering pieces—pieces that impress one as

a Haymarket alumna affecting baby-eyes and baby-talk further to sentimentalize a college boy—be chased out of the playhouse. And I should insist, and should summon the law to insist with me, that in the stead of such pornographic innuendo, such lewd signalings behind the back, we be given good, straightforward, clean, wholesome, healthy risqué farce in which adultery, instead of being, as now, nastily jockeyed with and titillatingly deferred, should figure as a realized fact.

Although Mr. John Palmer is a bit too Britishly timid in the full admitting of it, I agree completely with him that, in dealing comically with sex, the Grangousian way is certainly the best way—that sex is a perennially gross accident and necessity of the flesh—the capital instance of our damnation as immortal spirits compelled to utter ourselves grotesquely in blood and bone, but finding in that damnation a way of laughter whereby to accept it. “This,” says J. P., “is the comic way of all that broad, intimate comedy of life which now is no longer printed, but lingers still in every house where men and women live with the barriers down; lingers, too, in every boudoir and smoke-room where women or men find severally their honest fun. Such treatment of sex peeps furtively out of our comedy; but our authors are too much afraid of it to turn it to any fruitful purpose.” “Falstaff,” continues he, “no longer treads the English stage save as an historic ghost; and it is at present useless attempting to recover him. Some day, perhaps, when the theatre once more believes too fervently in the souls of men to be afraid of their bodies, Fal-



staff will come back to us, speaking the language of a new century. For the present universal vulgar comedy is extinct."

The chief objection to our so-called risqué American sex farces is their lack of vulgarity. Of course, they are in the main sufficiently ill-mannered to pass as comedies of manners with our first-night audiences, and they are, in general, sufficiently gross in their cheapness of wit, humor and intelligence to appeal strongly to such audiences as witty, humorous and intelligent, but their deficiency in the matter of fine, open-hearted, full-blooded vulgarity remains markedly offensive and repugnant to ladies and gentlemen. To be delicately risqué is an absurdly easy task; but to succeed in being downright and originally vulgar is a job only for crack shots. If you doubt me, try it for yourself. Unless I am mistaken, I imagine you will discover that your attempts at original abject vulgarity are very pitiful affairs—having the air of nothing better than such attempts as might be ventured by garbage-removers, trapeze performers or clever conversationalists. To be genuinely and artistically vulgar requires an education, a soundly trained mind, good breeding, social background. Find a completely satisfying vulgar person and you will find simultaneously an artist. But the Walt Whitmans and Richard Wagners, alas, are only too few and far between.

On the other hand, as I have remarked above, almost anyone may be adept at the delicately risqué. As a matter of record, I cannot at the moment think of a person of my acquaintance—man or woman—who is not more or less a whip hand at the business. The idea that when Oscar Wilde died the knack of the tactfully risqué died with him is as preposterous as it is popular. Compare, for instance, any line of Wilde's you choose with my friend Miller's "There can be no peace of mind for the old man who has taken for wife a young woman: he must ever be jealous of the man she should have married."

Why, even some of our American playwrights are handy at the thing! Consider, against any line of Wilde's, for example, Mr. Hurlbut's "When a man encounters a woman in a mood he doesn't understand, he desires to know if she is tired." (From "The Strange Woman.")

The very fact that Wilde has had countless imitators and Rabelais none (or exceeding few) proves, in a measure, the contention that complete, convincing vulgarity is ten thousand times as difficult of accomplishment as the nicely suggestive. For a million men like myself who can write such smartly risqué, but thoroughly childish, things as "The Empress Josephine—caviare to the General" and "Girls' boarding school—an institution of yearning" (I can turn 'em out, when absolutely pickled, by the yard), there is born but one fine old vulgar Wycherley with his fine old vulgar Mr. Horner. Shaw has tried his very damndest to be vulgar—and has regularly failed. So has Wedekind. So Brieux. So, ever save in one trivial instance, Echegaray. There is, so far as I know, only one piece of dramatic literature in Europe today that in any sense may be said to approach, however remotely, to handsome, soothing, compelling, admirable vulgarity, and that one piece is the "Reigen" of Arthur Schnitzler. Whenever you hear a critic get red in the type-writer over the "vulgarity" of a theatrical presentation, you may make up your mind that the critic in question confuses vulgarity with common stupidity. And, as I have proved to you, the two can not and do not go together—ever. That is, vulgarity cannot be negotiated whether in literature or stage buffoonery or what not save by intelligence and skill. Mr. George Robey, the most vulgar comic actor on the British stage, has been eulogized in one of the most dignified of the British critical journals of arts and letters for the purely intellectual quality of his vulgarity. Mr. Ade's fables in slang are at once vulgar and works of genuine literary art because their author is an



intellectual surveyor of the human comedy, a shrewd student of places, peoples and manners. Where, to turn to our more serious American stage stuffs, more thorough art than in the crass vulgarity of much of Mr. Walter's "Easiest Way"?

I repeat: What our comic stage needs more than anything else is vulgarity. Not vulgarity as vulgarity is commonly translated by our critics—vulgarity of diagonally hung waistcoat watchchains, of Broadway slang, of file-voiced, overdressed actors, of cheap and tawdry smut—but the incandescent vulgarity that reveals and depicts human nature at its truest. This latter vulgarity is the sort of vulgarity so excellently accomplished by Mr. Knoblauch in that scene of his "Faun" where the Faun invites the haughty lady out into the garden, a scene unfortunately edited to some considerable extent, I have heard, before it was given to the delicate public. This latter vulgarity is the species of vulgarity so adroitly managed in Toby Belch. It may take many forms, many movements—but if it be honest vulgarity and sincere, it is not to be mistaken for the kind of vulgarity with which Broadway currently confounds it. The stubborn foe that vulgarity must contend with is, of course, hypocrisy. The hypocrisy of second-rate members of second-rate society who are forced to pose the pretenses of a restaurant type of civilization and culture. When that day comes when our theatre will draw again its audiences from the ladies and gentlemen of the commonwealth, instead of as at present from the cerebral and social clowns of stuccoed grillrooms, Danses de This or That and similar rendezvous of the metropolitan social fractions, then may our theater safely devote itself to the frankly, completely and magnificently vulgar in its comic drama.

Let us cast an eye upon three farces of the so-called risqué class which have in the last month or two been visited upon the community. First, "Apartment 12K," the job of a Mr. Lawrence Rising. Here an effort already by some

weeks appropriately in the storing chambers. By virtue of the circumstance that the piece disclosed a bed to the audience, to say nothing of a man in pajamas and one-not-his-wife in night clothes, the play reviewers pronounced the procedure, as is the custom in such cases, vulgar. This, however, was precisely the fault of the farce. It was not vulgar. Common and cheap, yes; but vulgar, no. Not once from curtain rise to curtain fall were the characters made or allowed to act according to the natures of human beings. Not once when did their prototypes in the actual world of humans subconsciously demand that innate vulgarity pop out its rebellious but lovely bean, did Rising's characters hear. The result? A good vulgar atmosphere spoiled by injecting into it timid characters afraid of that atmosphere. As well try in a piece of straight dramatic writing to work out the "Hindle Wakes" case of a Fanny Hawthorne with a virgin. What ho! Laura Murdock a member of the Y. W. C. A.; Rachel Neve a pure bird; Iris Bellamy a subscriber to the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and Zoe Blundell a mender of socks!

No, no, if the writer takes, in farce, a vulgar cyclorama he must people it with pertinently vulgar persons. Otherwise, instead of deriving sound farce from the materials in hand, the residue will be neither flesh nor foul, neither human nor humanly vulgar, but merely a hypocritical potpourri of affected and tedious social conventionalities.

But Mr. Rising, it would appear from the two plays of his workmanship which I have been invited professionally to witness, is still too greatly the amateur of letters, life and humor to hope to write attractive vulgar farce. The barest mechanics of writing are still evidently not within his knowledge. He should, therefore, turn his attention to the writing of successful novels. (Or magazine short stories "intended for the home.") As to humor, this gentleman's arsenal of wit seems principally to contain the standard uncomplimen-



tary jokes about New York. P. P. Howe has observed that you may always spot a young writer by his fondness for mentioning by name in his writings rare wines and sauces. One may similarly always spot the amateur playwright by his predilection for cracking cynical jokes about New York. When the playwright grows up in his work, he learns that New York is of itself too much the cynical joke to be the butt of a reciprocal humor; and, having once learned this, he proceeds to crack cynical jokes about Philadelphia. And after a couple of years elapse and he gains from this a famous reputation, he is duly honored with election to the Society of American Dramatists, an election which permits him once a year to make a speech eulogizing the American drama and closing with an explosion of beautiful rhetorical fireworks in honor of Klaw and Erlanger, to whom he hopes to sell his next play.

"The Third Party," shown at the Shubert Theater, is of the college of adapted foreign "risqué" farce and, while happily more vulgar than its predecessor, exhibits still an undue and vastly regrettable restraint which scours the entertainment of the bulk of its possible humors. Where, however, in "Apartment 12K" the leading figures of the show, moving about the bed checkerboard, were made to persist unnaturally in a morality at once so dainty and so disgusting, so theoretically orthodox and so unsavory, there is at least one figure in this second sex-loto who, for something like fifteen minutes, has been permitted by the authors to view his joint occupation of a boudoir with a pretty young woman without the ethical alarm held to be necessary in the Anglo-Saxon theater. The unreserved vulgarity of the fellow, a vulgarity, of course, presently toned down and moralized to ease the terrible shock of the Broadway vestals, is quite captivating in this hour of melancholy farce sex cant and humorless, unseasoned quackery. Beyond these fifteen minutes of intelligent fun, the farce resigns itself to the customary confection of old roué,

fair young (adapted) virgin, overturned screen disclosing twain to wife, prevarications, motionings behind wife's back, stampings on neighbor's foot, squirting seltzer siphons, et cetera. The supposed resistance piece of the show, as I have already hinted, is the standard climacteric scene wherein a man and woman, not wedded but supposed by the other characters to be man and wife, are assigned to the same sleeping chamber. In one form or another, more or less precise, this situation is always with us. In different masks it has peeped out of any number of French farces, out of such native products as "Little Miss Brown," "An American Widow," "Nobody's Widow" and the like, out of "The Beautiful Adventure" (to name a French play not a farce), out of German farcical comedy, out of the transoceanic musical gambol.

In its Anglo-Saxon mask, the situation is, as I have observed, generally reduced to a condition of laughless ineffectuality through the same yap morale which has adapted "Gulliver's Travels" into a kindergarten tale, ripped out George Moore's appendix with a blue pencil, and raised the price of Burton's "Arabian Nights" to \$48.50.

For a correction of our local farce conditions, conditions which have made our home-made comic pieces fit only for the audition and contemplation of tots in arms and old maids, I look in good measure to Miss Margaret Mayo. Here a lady who is energetically vulgar, humanly vulgar, unafraid, unblushing, unashamed. Her "Baby Mine" was the funniest American farce because, of all, it was the vulgarest. Two of her financially unsuccessful attempts at serious dramatic writing—one was called "Behind the Scenes"; I forget the title of the other, having a knowledge of the play only from the fragmentary reports of my Pacific Coast patrol (the piece was done briefly out there)—were frank and sincere studies of the genus young girl as she is in contemporary native life, and probably may account their failure to this frankly vul-



gar, admirably vulgar and consequently honest attitude. (Margaret Horton Potter's family in Chicago scooted to buy up and quickly destroy the plates of her little book when that young woman essayed a similar job with her sister American baggage of the period.)

The artist in vulgarity has against him ever the allied forces of sentimental ignorance.

Miss Mayo's most recent adventure with the footlights takes the form of a dramatization of Mr. E. S. Field's short fiction, "Twin Beds." Although in no manner comparable with "Baby Mine," which it apparently was designed to parallel, the farce has sufficient of the characteristic Mayo touch to render the ear politely hospitable to it. There are numerous tedious spaces in the piece where the playwright has become a bit afraid of too much vulgarity and has "refined" the action, but these droughts find their eventual relief in pleasurable *contra bonos mores* moments wherein several beings, male and female, undress in public, get into one another's beds, roll around on the floor with the whisky rabies, discourse of the marital relations and vie briefly with the Don Juan of Echegaray, whose palate was touched at dawn by the stray lock of the Tarifena's hair, in an allusion to a somewhat similar phenomenon.

As I have suggested, Miss Mayo is ever happiest in her handling of vulgar situations. To this deft talent she owes her considerable and legitimate success in the theater. Where other native playwrights seek to tone down such situations and episodes, Miss Mayo tones them up. She is ever delightfully dirty. Whether or not this is a conscious playwrighting activity of the lady's, I am unable, of course, to say. Probably, indeed, she does not mean her episodes to be so; probably she strives in her studio to make them the reverse. But, conscious or not conscious, Miss Mayo's farce humor is vastly above the farce humor of the majority of her native rivals because it is,

basically, natural, human and hence ribald. Not smutty, mind this! There is a spacious chasm between smut and vulgarity of the sort which we are treating. Such vulgarity is of natural, smut of unnatural, birth. The former makes for the honest fun, the brotherly fun, of barrooms; the latter for the effeminate, mincing giggle of pink boudoirs. There is in vulgarity the true philosophy, the true biography of man as he is born; smut is the fiction side. Thus, only "refined" people are smutty.

\* \* \* \*

Bernard Shaw, in order gracefully to pave the way for his advent into the writing of a scenario or two for the moving pictures without loss to his dignity and position as a man of letters, recently wrote an article and pitched a speech narrating the considerable moral and ethical good to be derived for the community from the cinema. D'Annunzio, in order becomingly to account for his having written the scenario of "Cabiria," made announcement in all the elegance and finish of scrivening style at his command, that he believed thus and only thus might the great romances of the world's history be conveyed with sufficient vividness to this and coming generations, that moving pictures were to be the textbooks of the future. Celebrated writers and writers less celebrated and writers not celebrated at all have, with elaborate canniness, one and all accounted for their writing of plays for the films on divers such noble, charitable, artistic, uplifting grounds. Augustus Thomas and Richard Harding Davis, Rex Beach and H. G. Wells have, in quoted spaces, confronted me apologetically in the public prints with the "rare geographical art of the movie play when taken in the places and countries wherein the themes are laid," with the "educational realism," et cetera. Colleague Channing Pollock, ordinarily a strictly moral man, has explained the presence of his "Such a Little Queen" and "Little Grey Lady" on the screen with the words: "There has been a decided movement upward in the moving pictures . . . we



have upon the screen multitudes of people, magnificence of scenery, diversity of action such as never could be accomplished on the regular stage . . . they (the pictures) are coming to offer entertainment and instruction (Oh, Oh, Channing!) unique and unsurpassed. Max Reinhardt's greatest spectacles were a pinny-pinny-poppy show at a church sociable compared with the pictured, et cetera." Mr. Belasco has had interviews in the papers detailing his usual artistic reasons for going into the business. And so it has gone and still goes.

Therefore, let me, who also have degenerated, announce that I have written the film play in which my friend William J. Burns, the *de luxe* sleuth, is reacting the thrilling and successful part he played in the well-known Secret Service pursuit of the Philadelphia-Lancaster counterfeiters, in order that the public may be shown thus impressively the utter futility of law-breaking, in order that, thus, the moral status of the community may be improved, in order that any who are so foolish as to have criminal ideas may be thus vividly dissuaded, in order that—but I can't keep my face straight any longer. I wrote that film play because I knew it would make me a great deal of money! And there, very simply, you are.

In view of the fact that I wrote the play because I knew it would make me a great deal of money, I cannot too strongly urge upon you the advisability of going to see it. About twelve and one-seventh cents of every half dollar you pay the gentlemanly ticket seller to achieve the privilege of admittance comes to me. In modest return, I may promise you that, in spending an evening in the theater with this film, you will enjoy a profound, deep-breathed vacation from the following casualties of an evening spent in the contemplation of our dramatic stage:

1. "Comedy relief."
2. Mispronunciations.
3. Catarrh.
4. "Handsome" juveniles.

5. The broad *a*.
6. The artistic temperament.
7. Ingenues over forty.
8. Ingenues under forty.
9. Actors in the rôles of dukes or lords and actresses in the rôles of duchesses or countesses.
10. Black stocks with dinner jackets.
11. Evening coats with velvet collars.
12. Perfect dramatic technique.
13. Precise butlers.
14. "Cinderella" under a new title.
15. "Bright" lines.
16. Gilt furniture.
17. "Wonderful" lighting effects.
18. Mumbled dialogue.
19. The star's "Parisian" gowns.
20. A speech by the author.

No wonder the films have become so popular. No wonder they have caused countless thousands to desert the drama for them. The comparatively low price of admission seems to me to have not so much to do with the reasons as might be believed. In the SMART SET for August, 1912 (page 152), I spoke: "I have come to the conclusion that much of the erstwhile theatergoing public has transferred its affections to the cinematograph houses for the following reasons:

1. Because the public, not having to read day after day that such and such a film has been robbed of its diamond necklace, that such and such a film has been sued for divorce (with the naming of nine correspondents), or that such and such a film nonsensically has been interviewed upon returning on the *Olympic* from a summer trip abroad, has gained respect in one direction where it has lost it in another.

2. Because a film does not pronounce "hundred" as if it were spelled "hunderd," "been" as if it were spelled "bean," "uniform" as if it were spelled "unaform"; and because a film has not the habit of playing to its friends in the boxes.

3. Because a film tells a story naturally and without interruption instead of walking over to the fireplace at L C every once in a while and remaining



meekly in the background until some star delivers himself or herself of some irrelevant scene which has been "written in" to fatten up said star's part.

Let me add to these:

1. Because an inefficient and insignificant little film cannot carry on an affair with the manager and beguile the latter into palming her off on the public as a two-dollar headliner.

2. Because a film does not have its press-agent write articles for the papers in which the film sapiently points out the discrepancies in the philosophy of Bergson and Eucken or the way in which poor working girls *must* go wrong unless their weekly wage is raised by cruel, grasping employers from six dollars and a half to seven.

3. Because a film is not in the habit of throwing in half a dozen cocktails at dinner and then proceeding to forget its lines during its subsequent working hours.

4. Because a film, so far as we know, does not deeply consider the relative position and size of its dressing-room before making up its mind whether or not it feels like acting that night.

5. Because there is an ingenuity, freshness, vitality, originality and initiative about the film purveyors that the drama purveyors, faint-hearted and blind, do not possess, indeed, refuse to possess. Let a scenario writer prepare a film play which calls for a trip to Mars, the drying up of the Yellow Sea, an earthquake that destroys a whole country, the infusion of ideas into *Harper's Weekly*—or anything like these things seemingly impossible—and the film producers, if they see anything in the play likely to hold and divert the populace, will take a chance with the play. Let someone suggest to our drama purveyors that they take a chance with a play a bit off the Sardou or Charles Klein model—a perfectly simple but ingenious, fresh, vital and original play such, for instance, as "The Man in the Prompter's Box" by the Teuton Rittner (which I recall as having already mentioned in these pages), or Ferenc Molnar's "Fable of

the Wolf" (which I have for several years both in my critical writings and personally urged upon our drama producers—it is now at length announced for production by Mr. Belasco), or Chesterton's "Magic" or Galsworthy's "The Mob" or any play like them, and the majority of our drama producers will shudder at the very idea of even thinking of experimenting with such pieces upon the public.

The Burns picture lacks the gigantic dinge whose physique is at once the thrill and marvel of the ladies who have thronged the stalls before the "Cabiria" film. It lacks an undressed Annette Kellermann to provoke the gentlemen and a blue-eyed Mary Pickford to enrapture the youngsters. In one of its "titles" the word "nonpareil" is spelled "nonpariel" and in another one envisages the phrase "until either return." In one scene, a character playing a policeman elaborately shakes his stick after the manner of a character playing a policeman in the regular drama. And in another scene, an actor's breast heaves with emotion just like actors' breasts heave on the dramatic stage. But, believe me, it is not a bad show. Far from it! I ought to know. I wrote it. Allowing for its deficiencies as cited above, it still possesses the enormous virtues of a building blown to smithereens by dynamite, the trapping of a band of criminals through the use of Burns' celebrated "April Fool," "re-edited newspaper" and "phonograph" stratagems, and a complete exhibition of the intricate processes of counterfeiting. And Shakespeare himself, you must admit, never, in all his plays lumped together, did anything like this!

The staging of the picture play has been accomplished with skill and tact by Mr. Bertram Harrison, director of the Municipal Theater of Northampton, Massachusetts, assisted by film directors Saum and Cavanaugh.

It occurs to me, at this somewhat late juncture, that you may wonder, aside from my so-far convincing confession as to my motives for descending to a



mere so-called "movie", what caused me, a supposed dramatic critic, in the first place to consider so "uncritic" an enterprise. So be it. You shall know.

The temptations, in the order named, were:

## I

"Mrs. Warren's Profession' is not fit for women's ears. I feel sure that most of the women, and a good many of the men, who were present at the production of the play by the Stage Society, did not at first know, and finally merely guessed, what was the woman's trade. I therefore cannot withhold the opinion that the representation was unnecessary and painful." From J. T. Grein's critique, London, Jan. 12, 1902.

## II

"Mr. Chesterton's play is interesting, of course, but it is impossible to grant that it has a plot: A young man who goes mad because a conjuror puts out lights by 'magic,' a conjuror who neither takes the girl nor leaves her . . . these are not materials with which to build a drama." From W. L. George's critique of "Magic."

## "Sylvia Runs Away"

(Robert Housum)

WHERE innocence is bliss, 'tis folly to be critical.

## "On Trial"

(E. L. Reizenstein)

AN admirably written, engrossing melodrama—the work of a lad said to be twenty-one, who, by an impudent flouting of most of the school-book rules of dramatic technique, has succeeded in turning out a genuine specimen of purely melodramatic theatric art. I shall have considerable to say about this piece in the near future.

## "The Dancing Duchess"

(Kerr, Burnside & Lusk)

AN absurdly dull, commonplace, amateurist chow-chow. From first to last, not a trace of originality in dialogue, theme, music or staging.

## Sylvester Schaeffer

A YOUNG German who attempts to give a complete vaudeville show by himself. He succeeds. Could a more damning criticism be visited upon the gentleman?

## III

"Granville Barker is the first definite experimentalist in the modern English theater. A play by Mr. Barker is first and foremost, whatever its unorthodoxy, a play that *works*. For the technical improvement, at least in the contemporary English drama, the credit is more Mr. Granville Barker's than any other man's." From P. P. Howe's critique of the Barker plays.

## IV

"In 'Mr. Wu' there is a serious attempt to realize the oriental character with the occidental." From E. A. Baughan's critique of the Vernon-Owen melodrama.

## V

"'Pygmalion' is very sad. It is a tragedy." From John Francis Hope's critique of the Shaw comedy in "The New Age."

You see, as a sort o' vain American critic, I desired to venture my skill against the above triumphantly "uncritic" coups of these British critics. I regret to report that, try as I did, I failed. The gentlemen, single-handed, have beaten me by a thousand miles.



# A REVIEW OF REVIEWERS

By H. L. Mencken

**L**ABORING in this proud, esthetic galley (as I made mention last month), since the year 1908 of the present or Christian era, I have naturally passed through many curious adventures and endured many vicissitudes. Once I was indicted for mayhem upon a best-seller; another time a lady poet tried to kiss me in a public barroom; on four or five occasions I have had to borrow money to get my lingerie out of the laundry; and eighteen times I have been blackballed in literary and sporting clubs. But one of the experiences that I have constantly missed, for all this excess of physical and metaphysical hazards, has been that of reviewing one of my own books, or, to be more accurate, that of exposing and denouncing the reviews of it by other reviewers. No less than four times during the six years my facile pen has achieved a new and praiseworthy volume, and every time it has been fallen upon and put to the torture by a horde of ignorant assassins, male and female; and yet, as I say, I have always throttled my wrath and held my peace, thus sacrificing justice to a false sense of delicacy, and the truth to an insincere and hypocritical modesty.

But no more. The time has come to turn over a new leaf. And the chance conveniently offers itself in the fact that the last fruit of my fancy, to wit, "EUROPE AFTER 8.15" (*Lane*), is not, properly speaking, mine at all, for two-thirds of it was written by a syndicate consisting of Willard Wright and the estimable G. J. Nathan, and so I represent only an inconsiderable minority of it, and am thus free to speak of it with easy grace. This I

do at once, remarking simply that it is a book of merit, with a lot of valuable information in it, not to mention the charm of style.

Its purpose, I need not add (for no doubt you have already read it, and what is more, enjoyed it and told your friends about it), is to depict, in a suave and ingratiating manner, the postprandial divertissements of five European capitals—Vienna, Munich, Berlin, London and Paris—and, in particular, such of them as do not lie floridly upon the surface. And behind that first purpose, there is the second one of poking a bit of harmless fun at the Americanos who snout through Europe in search of levantine seductions, seeing a Lola Montez in every milliner's apprentice along the Rue de la Paix, and the gay life in the stodgy Münchener's nightly stevedoring of his gallon of *dunkel*—the Americanos who "open wine" for the drabs of all Christendom and half of Islam at the Bal Tabarin and the Moulin Rouge, and jump upon the tables and cheer when the Berlin pseudo-orchestras play "O Tannenbaum" or "Heil dir im Siegerkranz," and pronounce "Hofbräu" as if it were spelled "Huff-brow" and "Louvre" as if it were an inflected form of liver, and come home smelling abominably of bad perfumes and worse liqueurs, and full of hair-raising anecdotes for the brethern of the vestry, and a dim understanding that Rubens was an Italian architect of 150 B. C., and a profound conviction that all Europeans, including even Gerhart Hauptmann, take tips.

Thus privy to the aim and purport of the book, and not without some



sense, let me hope, of its virtue as literature, what have you to say of the critic of the *Chicago News*, who finds that it is "frankly and at times aggressively vulgar," and who moralizes upon the "crudeness" of the authors? And what of the critic of the *New York Herald*, who pooh-poohs it in a superior fashion, and opines that "one man might have done the work in a better style"? And what of the critic of the *Detroit News*, who denounces it for "a vague and poisonous atmosphere of cultured indifference, the taking for granted of a certain moral attitude on the part of the reader, the unspoken assumption of ethical callousness, the same spirit that marked the work of the decadents of the last century"? And what of that fourth critic—not to be identified, for the name of his low gazette has departed from the clipping—who reviles the authors for their "talk of restaurants and intoxicants," and is shocked because "immoralities are hinted at broadly"? And what of that fifth and last rascal, anonymous for the same reason, who bellows against the book because "there is nothing in it to lead the reader into profitable thought," and no mention from end to end of either the Sistine Madonna or the Paris morgue?

As for me, I reply to these carpers and moralists in the only way countenanced by the critical punctilio. That is to say, I mount the rostrum, put on the black cap and proceed to pronounce a curse upon them. May they pass through eternity in a bottomless pit of Indiana best-sellers, doomed forever to read six a day! May they be racked and stretched until they are as tall as the novel heroes in the illustrations of Howard Chandler Christy, and with heads as small! May they be condemned to indissoluble marriage with heroines by George Barr McCutcheon, the least auburn of them with hair as red as the binding of "Who's Who in America"! May they be misquoted unendingly upon the slip covers of eighth-rate novels, with all their careful qualifications stricken out! May

their typewriters break down with press time but an hour away and the foreman of the composing room shrieking at the door! May the proofroom mutilate their grammar and make mincemeat of their parts of speech! May the galley boys pie their standing matter at least once a week, and may type lice devour what is left! May the make-up men of their degraded and ornery *zeitungs* mix up their cut lines with those of the sporting editors, printing Jack Johnson for William Dean Howells, and Mrs. Jack for Edith Wharton! May they get at least fifty abusive letters from publishers in every mail, and a hundred from poets! May they revolt against orders from the business office, and be shot at sunrise for their contumacy! May they yield to a petty and puerile vanity and write books themselves—and send them to me for review!

So; the solemn business is over. The punishment has been fitted to the crime. Let us turn now from all these revolting foes of the bozart and hear the sweeter words of critics of a higher sagacity. For example, the gentleman of the Philadelphia *North American*, who finds that the work is marked by "a breezy, racy, amusing descriptive narrative," and that it is "a most delightful little volume, full of mirthful glee." "Mirthful glee," I suspect, is tautological, for the essence of glee is mirth—but who cares a hoot for tautology? Away with it! It is a brother to sociology, an aunt to penology; in brief, a pseudo-science, pursued only by college professors and quacks. Nor am I going to set up a quarrel with the fair critic of *Vogue*, who says that when "the three authors are older they will drop, no doubt, a little of their somewhat startling brilliancy of style." Well, well, who knows? We must all grow old, to be sure, and age brings decay. A sad thought, but why repine? Let us be glad of such rare and valuable gifts while we have them, and blush prettily and deprecatingly when they are praised.

The *Vogue* lady goes on in the same agreeable key:



"They have told of what they saw with an abounding freshness of style, without indecent suggestiveness under their frank phrasing, and with eyes not only for what is genuinely beautiful in the physical aspects of urban nights, but for what is simple, sweet and cleanly charming in its human elements."

Thanks, Mlle. Collège! Thou hast come nearer to our hearts than any other!

Various other critics, with perhaps equal good will, fall short of this sympathetic accuracy. He of the San Francisco *Chronicle* calls it "a very readable book," and then has done. He of the Minneapolis *Journal* calls it "smartly intellectual" and "a model of flippant erudition." He of the Detroit *Free Press* (maybe the same fellow, for literary criticism is now syndicated at wholesale, like the pictures of Mutt and Jeff) uses exactly the same words. He (or she) of the Portland *Oregonian* calls it "buoyant," which is from the OF "*boye*"—a fetter or halter, and means "having the power or tendency to float or keep afloat." He of the Oakland (California) *Tribune*, says that it has an "interesting title" and will delight the "seeker for the original and bizarre." He of the Brooklyn *Eagle* calls it "a burlesque of late hours." He of the Cincinnati *Times-Star* finds that it is "as gay as the life they [the authors] saw—and the reader will be convinced that they saw some gay life." And finally, to jump the others, there is William Marion Reedy, of the St. Louis *Mirror*, who heads his notice, "Three Bad Boys' Wicked Books," and delivers himself as follows:

I was going abroad this year, but I've read the book and now won't. I feel like I've had a whiz through all the capitals of Europe in the most excellent company of fellows who didn't need any guides. The capitals yielded all their charms, some slightly secret, and I've breathed an air of freedom innocent of puritanism one can't have in lid-ridden St. Louis. . . . Reading Mencken, Nathan and Wright, one realizes that the rottenest thing about American cities is the coercion of gaiety after dark by hypocritical prudery. How John Lane could have published

"Europe After 8.15" without the fear of Comstock in his heart passes my comprehension. . . . It isn't every book one can close with such a sense of sin, I can tell you—and not the sin of wasting time, either!

*Hoch*, Reedy! An honest and friendly fellow! The ideal critic! Take his advice and—borrow the book! But lest you fall into the perplexities of some of the other critics, I had better tell you just how it was manufactured. (The critic of the New York *Herald*, baffled by the problem of joint authorship, concludes, as we have seen, that "one man might have done the work in better style." The critic of the Philadelphia *North American*, knowing something of Nathan's morals, sees Wright and me as "Nathan-led." The critic of the Los Angeles *Times* argues that "the style of Mencken, Nathan and Wright is much alike, but if one has consistently [American for constantly, regularly, habitually] read THE SMART SET it is not difficult, at least, to be confident in guessing.")

But, as I say, the truth is simple and had better be told. Nathan did the chapters on Paris and Berlin; Wright did that on Vienna and most of that on London; I did that on Munich, the first three and last two paragraphs of that on London, and the Preface in the Socratic Manner. This to settle bets in the Sunday schools, and to aid the lady who keeps the card catalogue of the Jamestown (N. Y.) Public Library. And in parting, a grateful kiss to the critic of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, who says that "the cleverest part of the book is the preface," and another to the critic of the Los Angeles *Times*, who says that it is "worth the price of admission alone." I am with you, gents! And Nathan and Wright would be with you, too—if they could rid themselves of passion and prejudice and get down to the facts.

Comes now the backward-looking George Moore with the third, last and darndest volume of his "Hail and Farewell," by name "VALE"—but let George wait in the antechamber while



we give ear to a few authors with Mes-sâges, Remedies and Clarion Calls. For example, to Prof. Dr. Richard C. Cabot, who fills 341 pages with a discourse on "WHAT MEN LIVE BY" (*Houghton-Mifflin*), the same being Work, Play Love and Worship, the "four inexorable blessings."

Inexorable? How can a blessing be inexorable? The word is a compound of the Latin adjective "*exorabilis*," meaning placable, easy-going, readily entreated, and the prefix "*in*," signifying negation. It thus means implacable, inflexible, relentless, tough. How can a blessing be any of these things? . . . But let us make no quarrel upon the learned doctor's adjectives. Elsewhere in his treatise he is careful to avoid such lexicological snarls. What he has to say, in truth, is not only put into impeccable English, but also into impeccable platitude. When he argues that "no one is armor-proof against forgetfulness," or that "to share fatigue, disappointment, surprise, hunger and good appetite gives people a common life," or that "idleness is corrosive," or that "we want to see the product of our works," or that "Satan is still on the job"—when, as Paul Armstrong would say, he pulls such stuff, there is nothing to do but move that it be made unanimous. Even when he tries to disguise one of his old saws by putting it into new terms, the concealment is commonly very clumsy.

I choose as a specimen his variation upon "Look before you leap," a proverb so ancient that it appears in every civilized tongue, and even in Arabic, Turkish, Bengali, Tamil and Sanskrit. (*Vide* "Eastern Proverbs and Emblems," by the Rev. Dr. J. Long.) Dr. Cabot makes it "One measures the stream before leaping it"—and thus lets all the steam out of it. As we hear it from the Poloniuses of everyday, it is apt, brief and arresting. As we encounter it in its common variations—*e. g.*, "Look out!" "Mind your step!" "*Verboten!*" "Beware of the dog!" and "Stop! Look! Listen!"—it is all of these things, and racy to boot. But

as we find it in Cabot it is disemboweled denaturized, dephlogisticated. He performs a fatal laparotomy upon it, and then decorates the carcass with a French pronoun!

Do I here revile the good doctor with too much heat, striving laboriously to pick a quarrel with him? Do I train cannon upon his philosophical fleas? If so, my excuse is the great damage that the commerce in platitudes does to the trade I practise for a living. An author who fills a book with the obvious, who hides himself behind the breastworks of the undeniable, is an author who plays a sorry trick upon book reviewers. He leaves them nothing to dispute, nothing to correct, nothing to make a row about—save, perhaps, as in this case, a stray error in etymology, an occasional wolf tone in phrasing. They find it impossible to manufacture reading matter out of him; he cheats them, hamstringing them, turns their teeth. And when this disagreeable bafflement comes as a complete surprise, when it is perpetrated by an author from whom revolutionary and disputative stuff is expected, then it gives double pain. Knowing Dr. Cabot as a pathologist of parts, I naturally assumed that he would also turn out to be a philosopher of parts, and so it dismayed me to find him dealing heavily in the immemorial rumble-bumble of the Edward Boks, the Herbert Kaufmans and the Orison Swett Mardens, with polite bows to Swedenborg, Tolstoi and Emerson. Wherefore and by reason of which, I denounce his composition as a vain and hollow thing, and petition him to go back to the serumtherapy of his earlier adoration, and so leave the uplift to sages whose waste of time is less costly to the world. Put the offense at its worst to get the measure of it: imagine Dr. Ehrlich writing essays in the manner of E. S. Martin!

"JUVENILE COURTS AND PROBATION," by Bernard Flexner and Roger N. Baldwin (*Century*), is a handbook for the uplifters who now devote themselves (always at good salaries) to rescuing the young craps shooter from his sev-



ens and elevens, and the gaudy working girl from the villains who lie in wait for her in dance halls and on excursion boats. The business, it appears, has now become very precise and "scientific"; it has its "principles" and its "standards"; it is adorned by a rising school of "experts"—of whom, by the way, the ineffable Judge Ben B. Lindsey, of Denver and the yap Chautauquas, is the father superior.

The idea, as I gather it, is that the youngster who devotes himself to violence and thievery is to be regarded hereafter, not as a lawbreaker and a nuisance, but as one to be pitied and lifted up. The learned authors argue eloquently against putting the juvenile offender—i. e., "a child under sixteen, or seventeen, or eighteen" (page 8)—in the dock. The real culprit, they seem to feel, is always Society, and the sole purpose of a proceeding in a Juvenile Court should be to find out how and wherein Society—as represented by parents, teachers, the police, the Rum Demon, the White Slave Trust, the Interests—has offended, and to take measures against its offense. Thus the ancient doctrine of innate depravity is scuttled and sunk by these revolutionists in jurisprudence.

Well, let it go! The time is one of change. The new science of penology dawns, with its innumerable caravan of probation officers, policewomen, "social workers," Chautauqua lecturers, sociologists, "sex hygienists and other such thrifty "experts." The jails must be emptied of thieves to make room for the railroad presidents. The crook of yesterday is the petted unfortunate of today; the crook of today is the fellow that everyone was envying yesterday.

In "DREAMS," by Prof. Henri Bergson, the French parlor philosopher (*Huebsch*), I can find nothing that is not better and more clearly stated in the well-known works of Havelock Ellis and Prof. Sigmund Freud, and in "THE MYSTERY OF PAIN," by James Hinton (*Kennerley*), I can find nothing that makes the mystery any the less mysterious. The Bergson discourse

goes back to the year 1901, when it was first printed in the *Revue Scientifique*; the remarks of Hinton are of the vintage of 1866. Such a violation of philosophical sarcophagi has little to commend it, particularly when they are found to be empty of valuable contents. Hinton clothes his ideas in so much pious verbiage, meaningless in itself, that it is not easy to discover what he means to say, but his central doctrine, as I understand it, is about as follows: that pain is the evidence of "a diseased and wanting state in man," which "arises and must arise from sin."

All of us can bear a certain amount of pain without flinching: it is, in fact, a necessary concomitant of every effort, or, as Hinton chooses to put it, of every sacrifice. But there is a line that we are still too weak in spirit to cross—a line beyond which further effort or sacrifice becomes unendurable. Man, however, aspires to cross it, and in the aspiration he reveals his highest courage, and his life takes on its loftiest significance. But what has this got to do with sin? And why speak of a "diseased and wanting state"? How can it be an evidence of disease for the body to protest with all its strength against the forces which seek to destroy it? How can life find a meaning in the negation of life?

Maybe I misunderstand Prof. Hinton here, but if so there is no defense of him in the fact, for to be mystical and unintelligible is indistinguishable from being wrong. The truth is that his alleged explanation of the mystery of pain is no explanation at all. It does not make neuralgia a bit more bearable or a bit more accountable to argue that it "arises and must arise from sin." Such poppycock belongs to Christian Science and the International Sunday School Lessons; merely to state it is to give offense to intelligent adults.

But, fortunately enough, the whole discussion is fast becoming academic and meaningless. Pain is one of the devils that man has got firmly by the tail. A few years more, and he will have scotched it. The situations in



which excruciating pain is unavoidable have been enormously reduced in our time, and the process goes ahead more rapidly year by year. A century hence pain may be obliterated entirely, at least in civilization. Will its departure wreck the race? Will the *genus homo* lose courage and endurance, and so grow soft? I doubt it. There will still be plenty of opportunity to dare, to struggle, to face hardship, to do without. The only difference will be this: that the great enterprises and renunciations of aspiring man will be lifted clearly above the agonies of a hog in a slaughter house.

Which brings us to "THE CLUB WOMAN'S HANDY BOOK," by Kate Louise Roberts (*Funk-Wagnalls*), in which all human knowledge, at least in the sense that clubwomen understand the term, is boiled down to less than two hundred pages, but with the addition of the saving advice that very little actual culture is to be got out of "a sheaf of mediocre compilations"; and to "WHAT SCULPTURE TO SEE IN EUROPE," by Lorinda Munson Bryant (*Lane*), a useful tome for those who like to be told what to like; and to "LOVE," by Mildred Champagne (*Badger*), a book of sentimental platitudes in the best sobsquad manner, with a charming portrait of the author; and to "ROUGHING IT DE LUXE," by Irvin S. Cobb (*Doran*), a humorous account of a journey to the Western show places, with capital illustrations by John T. McCutcheon; and to "THE OLD GAME," by Samuel G. Blythe (*Doran*), in which the author tries to prove that he is happy after three years and a half on the water wagon—but without any noticeable success.

The weakness in Blythe's argument lies in his grotesque exaggeration of the damage inflicted by a moderate use of the ethyllic juices. "When you *do* drink," he says, "about all you *do* is drink"—a sheer imbecility. Taking moderate drinkers in the mass and teetotalers in the mass, it must be plain to everyone that the former show many more men whose lives are worth living,

and vastly more men whose acquaintance is worth having. Blythe himself has to admit that his fellow drys are anything but inspiring companions. He himself, though he protests pathetically that well water has done him no harm, shows its bad effects clearly. He has become self-righteous, ungenial, intolerant, unfair. He overstates the dangers of alcohol and understates its benefits. In brief, he shines forth as an awful example of what riding on the water wagon can do to a man. Read his book—and take warning!

In "MIND AND SPIRIT," by Thomas Kirby Davis, D.D. (*Sherman-French*), the reverend author starts out by arguing that the common people have more sense than "the educated, the opulent and the eminent," and on page 3 he reaches the doctrine that "the mind being inferior to the spirit, the object of all education should be to enable the spirit to dominate the mind." This will be enough for the Rev. Dr. Thomas Kirby Davis, whoever he may be. In "A PRIMER OF HIGHER SPACE," by Claude Bragdon (*Manas*), we discover a theosophist trying to prove that four-dimensional bodies exist on the "astral plane." The book has been extravagantly praised by the *New York Times*. Enough! Enough! In "SYRINX," by Mitchell S. Buck (*Marie*), we have a series of Grecian rhapsodies in rhythmic prose, many of them of a considerable beauty. And in "TENDER BUTTONS," by Gertrude Stein (*Marie*), we come upon a volume of harmless and amusing balderdash by the press agent of the Futurists. Examples of this sweet stuff:

Stick stick call then, stick stick sticking, sticking with a chicken. Sticking in a extra succession, sticking in.

Enthusiastically hurting a clouded yellow bud and saucer, enthusiastically so is the bite in the ribbon.

The title of the first of these miniature prose poems is "Chicken"; that of the second is "A New Cup and Saucer." It is upon such subjects and in such advanced style that Miss Stein discourages, to the edification and delight



of the emancipated and forward-looking. The New York *Sun* (quoted in the canned review), says that she is "an artist in the new use of words." In the same sense exactly the Futurists of her adoration are artists in the new use of colors and line. It is the great achievement of the Futurists that they have made painting easier for the man who doesn't know how to do it than for the man who does know how to do it. It is the great achievement of Miss Stein that she has made English easier to write and harder to read. Meanwhile, it would be interesting to get an analysis of her nonsense from Dr. A. A. Brill or some other such explorer of the esoteric significances of words.

The wizards and the munyons depart. Let in George Moore: he has been waiting long enough. When I tell you that his "VALE" (*Appleton*) is the best of the three volumes of his "Hail and Farewell," I tell you enough, I hope, to make you want to read it without further ado. Not since "Impressions and Opinions" has Moore put more charm and color into the English language; not since the famous preface to the bowdlerized American edition of "Memoirs of My Dead Life" has he been more humorous, or more intimate, or more thoroughly delightful. One gets in this thick volume, not only a full-length picture of Moore himself, as youth, man and ancient, but also a series of brilliant pictures of his friends. For example, John Millington Synge: "a thick stubbling growth of hair" starting out of "a strip of forehead like black twigs out of the head of a broom"; a "flat, ashen-colored face, with two brown eyes, looking at me not unsympathetically"; a "large, uncouth head"; a "ragged mustache"; a pair of "great country shoes spreading over the carpet." Somehow, I had always thought of Synge as a delicate and small-boned fellow—a sort of sublimated clerk. But here he emerges in all the Gothic ruggedness of a navvy, with his celluloid collar, his oafish silences and his broad and hairy hands. Moore was somewhat doubtful of Synge at the

start. When the manuscript of "The Playboy of the Western World" reached him, he made fatuous suggestions of changes in the last act. Synge was disinclined to make them: he had already rewritten the act thirteen times. Moore seems to have resented this flouting of his advice, but the coolness didn't last, and the two were good friends before Synge died.

Yeats, of course, is in almost every chapter of the book—Yeats, the Celt *par excellence*, with his pagan love of beauty and his childish superstitions. One day Moore and John Eglinton fell to discussing the "one great passion" of Yeats's life. Was it innocent? Was it pure? Moore volunteered to put the question to Yeats himself, and put it he did. The poet answered sorrowfully: "I was very young at the time, and was satisfied with . . . ." Moore has forgotten the exact word, but remembers the virtuous denial. "I was sorry for Yeats," he says, "and for his inspiration, which did not seem to have survived his youth, because it had arisen out of an ungratified desire." And then a long chapter of unmoral moralizing, chiefly devoted to showing that too much conscience is bad for an artist. But here, alas, I suspect alien editing. Can it be that "VALE," like the "Memoirs," has had to yield to the Chautauquan respectability of its American publishers? What of "Euphorian in Texas," printed in the *English Review* for July? Isn't it obviously a chapter from the book? And isn't it plainly lacking in the book as it stands?

This "Euphorian in Texas" is incomparably of Moore, Moorean. It tells a strange tale of a young woman from Austin, Texas, who crossed the seas to Ireland upon a highly patriotic mission—no less, indeed, than that of seeking a father for a Texas genius, and so giving the commonwealth a literature. But why apply to Moore? Why not to Meredith, to Swinburne, to Yeats, to Gosse—particularly to Gosse? Moore mulls over the problem solemnly, and then gives it up . . . The lady, one



hears, remained in Dublin a week or two, and then "she smiled and went away, and this letter announcing his birth is all I have." Other byzantine amours are in the chronicle: a great babbling of ancient secrets. Lately I took Moore to task in a newspaper article for all this kissing and telling. He replied: "It seems to me that an amatory indiscretion is only possible within a zone of ten or fifteen years; after five and twenty—certainly after thirty—love adventures are no longer indiscretions, but matter for literary history." A curious doctrine, indeed. The New Thought's repeal and reenactment of "lying like a gentleman"!

In the fiction that has reached me since our last meeting I can find little that is worth extensive notice. The best of it, perhaps, is to be found in Jack London's book of short stories, "THE STRENGTH OF THE STRONG" (*Macmillan*). For London's literary talents I have the very highest admiration: he is one of the few novelists now at large among us who actually know how to write. But he has an unhappy habit of introducing a didactic purpose into his compositions, and nine times out of ten it spoils them out of hand, for the things he believes in are chiefly foolish things—*e. g.*, Socialism and Prohibition—and his manner of arguing for them is extraordinarily inept and tedious. In the present volume, five of the seven stories are more or less contaminated by this fatuous endeavor to be instructive and uplifting. But the two that remain, "The Sea Farmer" and "Samuel," more than make up for the boredom thus inflicted. Each of them presents a thoughtful and penetrating study of a simple soul in conflict with inscrutable destiny, and in each there is the sound work of a first-rate artist. The first of the two, in particular, reveals a profound sincerity and poignancy. London is here experimenting with the method and materials of Joseph Conrad, and with a very near approach to complete success. His Captain MacElrath might well claim entry into the company of Conrad's im-

mortal merchant skippers. He is of the clan of Captain Allistoun, of the *Narcissus*, and Captain MacWhirr, of the *Nan-Shan*.

In "THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL," by May Sinclair (*Macmillan*), a collection of eight short stories and novelettes, I can find no such merit. These stories—or, at any rate, those that I have been able to read at all—have a superficial air of intellectuality, but at bottom they are trivial and artificial. They deal, even in their titles, with "temperaments," "appearances" and other such shadows; they are full of pointless and laborious dialogue; one leaves them with a feeling of having been bombarded by mere words. Nor is there anything to stir the blood in "BROKEN MUSIC," by Phyllis Bottome (*Houghton-Mifflin*), the story of a temperamental musician, gaily written but uninspired; nor in "THE CRIME DOCTOR," by E. W. Hornung (*Bobbs-Merrill*), wherein thrills are mixed with quasi-science; nor in "THE ROUSING OF PARKSIDE," by William Ganson Rose (*Duffield*), in which we see how an efficiency expert pumps life into a moribund Sunday school; nor in "ERNA VITEK," by Alfred Kreymborg (*Boni*), in which three young gallants agree to test a fascinating waitress's virtue and it departs from her forever on page 94.

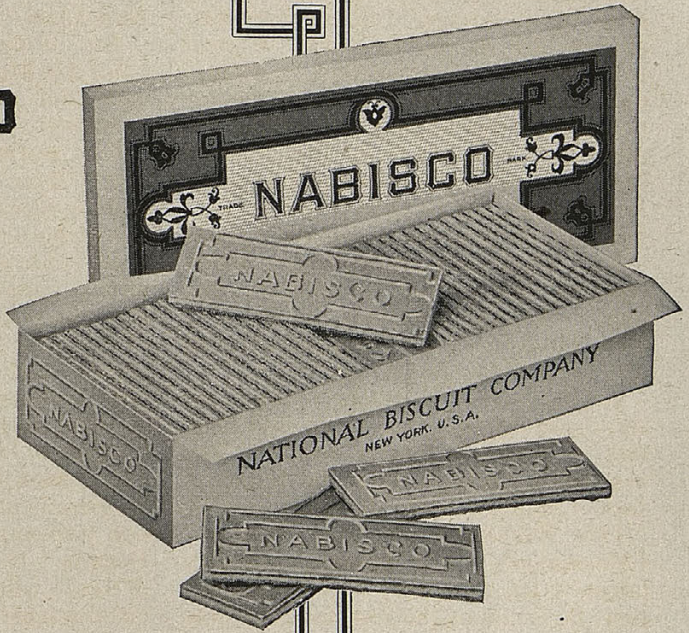
Better stuff is in "THE SECRET BOOK," by Edmund Lester Pearson (*Macmillan*), a series of humorous sketches in a library, half essay and half story, and in "THE WILL TO LIVE," by M. P. Willcocks (*Macmillan*), and in "FULL SWING," by Frank Danby (*Lippincott*), and in "THE HEART'S COUNTRY," by Mary Heaton Vorse (*Houghton-Mifflin*), and in "FAITH TRESILION," by Eden Phillpotts (*Macmillan*), in which the author abandons his Dartmoor hinds long enough to give us a bouncing melodrama of Napoleonic days. Space runs out: I can no more than mention these books. But I rather fancy that you will find something to interest you, or at least to keep you awake, in each of them.



## NABISCO

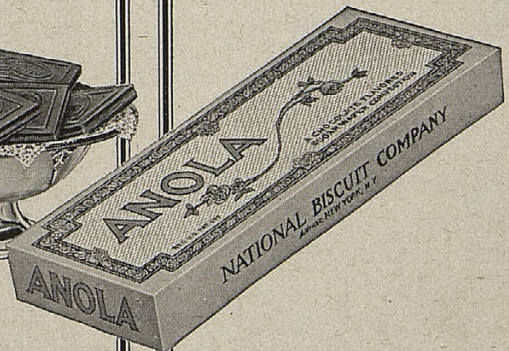
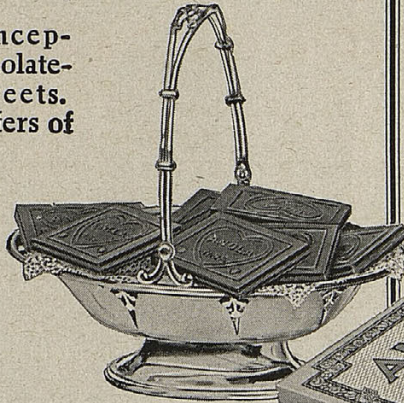
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# VOGUE

WITH the whole world at war the United States becomes a little world of itself. Every ordinary source of fashion news cut off, American women everywhere—from the most exclusive importer in New York to the little dressmaker in the smaller towns, from the society leader who spends \$500 on a single gown to the woman who doesn't spend \$500 in an entire season—all have turned to Vogue.

More than ever before, Vogue stands absolutely alone as the authoritative source of what will be worn by really well-dressed American women. More than ever before will you need its authoritative advice in your buying. Once, perhaps, you may have considered Vogue a luxury; this season, at least, Vogue is an absolute necessity for the woman who can't afford to *waste* money on clothes!

## \$2 INVESTED IN VOGUE WILL SAVE YOU \$200

The gown you buy and never wear is the really expensive gown. Gloves, boots, hats that just miss being exactly what you want are the ones that cost more than you can afford.

Why take chances again this season of confusion, when by merely sending the coupon, and at your convenience paying \$2—a tiny fraction of the loss on a single ill-chosen hat or gown—you can insure the correctness of your whole Autumn and Winter wardrobe?

Consider, then, that for \$2 not only may you have Vogue's great Autumn Fashions number, but all through the Fall and Winter the numbers that follow them.

### Here are the twelve numbers you will receive

|                 |         |                  |         |
|-----------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| AUTUMN PATTERNS | Oct. 1  | LINGERIE         | Jan. 1  |
| WINTER FASHIONS | Oct. 15 | MOTOR & SOUTHERN | Jan. 15 |
| SHOPS           | Nov. 1  | DRESS MATERIALS  | Feb. 1  |
| VANITY          | Nov. 15 | SPRING FORECAST  | Feb. 15 |
| CHRISTMAS GIFTS | Dec. 1  | SPRING PATTERNS  | Mar. 1  |
| CHRISTMAS       | Dec. 15 | SPRING MILLINERY | Mar. 15 |

VOGUE, 443 Fourth Avenue, NEW YORK

Please send {

1. Twelve numbers of Vogue beginning with the Patterns Number. Will remit \$2 on receipt of bill November 1st.

2. Thirteen numbers beginning with the Forecast Number. \$2 enclosed herewith.

(Please write very plainly)

OR

Your subscription will then start with the Patterns and continue through the next eleven numbers. Bill will be sent to you about November 1st.

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

State .....

SMART SET  
Oct.

The Autumn Pattern Number is already on the newsstands. If no newsdealer is near send in this coupon. If you wish to enclose the \$2, and save us bookkeeping, we will show our appreciation by starting your subscription with the Forecast of Autumn Fashions Number of September 15th, making thirteen numbers instead of twelve. If more convenient, send coupon without money. Your subscription will then start with the Patterns and continue through the next eleven numbers. Bill will be sent to you about November 1st.





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BROMO-SELTZER**

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Sluggish, drooping, lifeless tissues give an unnatural color, and cause hollows, lines and signs of age or neglect. Mrs. Adair's

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do not deal with outward superficial effects, but stimulate the tissues and muscles of the face, neck and chest into healthy action, rounding out the contour, removing lines around the eyes, the forehead, nose and mouth, and filling in the hollows of the cheeks and chest.

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**For Freckles,** Ganesh Freckle Cream. Applied before retiring and left on over night. \$1.

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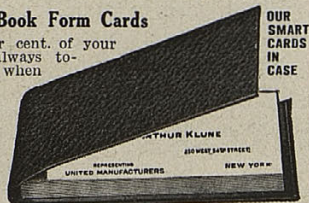
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| Dry Martini  | Dry Manhattan |
| Brut Martini | Bronx         |
| Dubonnet     | Tom Gin       |
| Whiskey      | Vermouth      |

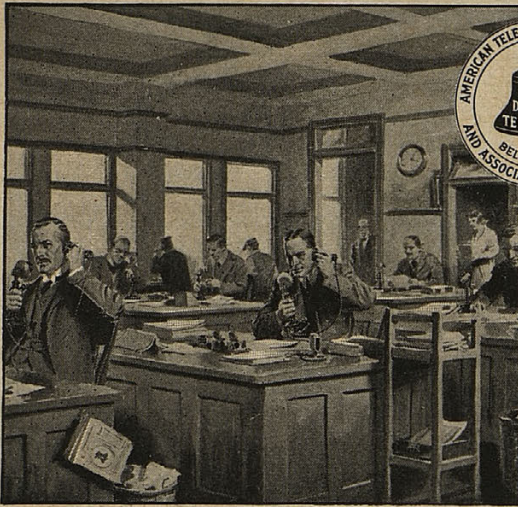
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## Fair Play in Telephone Rates

**I**T is human nature to resent paying more than any one else and to demand cheap telephone service regardless of the cost of providing it.

But service at a uniform rate wouldn't be cheap.

It would simply mean that those making a few calls a day were paying for the service of the merchant or corporation handling hundreds of calls.

That wouldn't be fair, would it? No more so than that you should pay the same charge for a quart of milk as another pays for a gallon.

To be of the greatest usefulness, the telephone should reach every home, office and business place. To put it there, rates must be so graded that every person may have the kind of service he requires, at a rate he can easily afford.

Abroad, uniform rates have been

tried by the government-owned systems and have so restricted the use of the telephone that it is of small value.

The great majority of Bell subscribers actually pay less than the average rate. There are a few who use the telephone in their business for their profit who pay according to their use, establishing an average rate higher than that paid by the majority of the subscribers.

To make a uniform rate would be increasing the price to the many for the benefit of the few.

All may have the service they require, at a price which is fair and reasonable for the use each makes of the telephone.

These are reasons why the United States has the cheapest and most efficient service and the largest number of telephones in the world.

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